

都市シリーズ

閉鎖都市 巴里^パ^リ 上

著●川上稔

■ Closed City 巴里



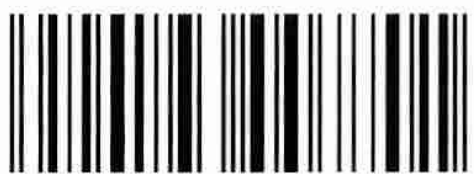
電撃文庫



9784840213493

ISBN4-8402-1349-6

C0193 ¥770E

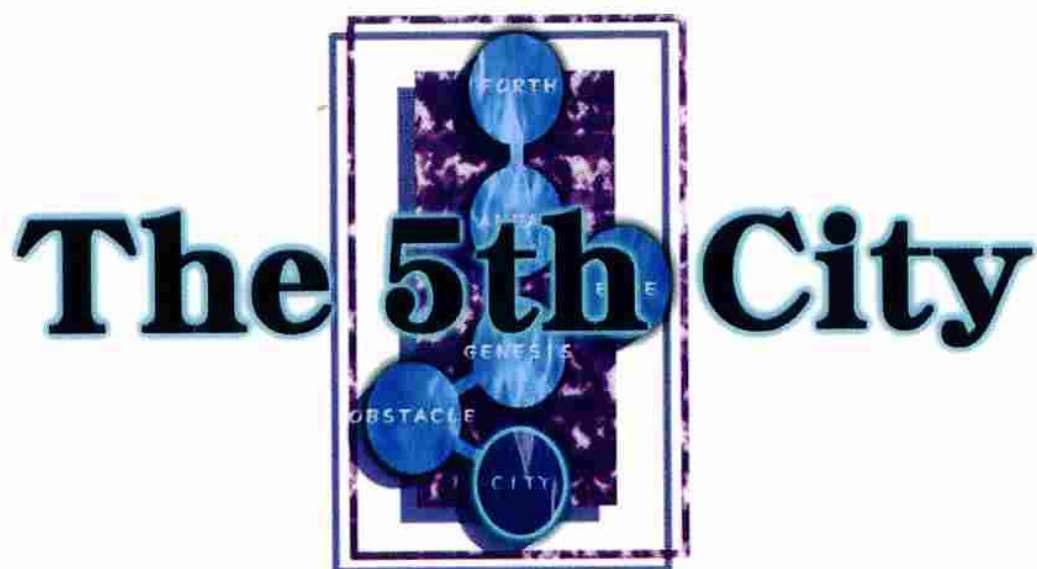


1920193007701

発行●メディアワークス

定価： 本体770円

※消費税が別に加算されます



とし
都市シリーズ
へい さ と し パ リ
閉鎖都市 巴里〈上〉

文字情報によってのみ存在が可能となる都市—^{パリ}巴里。この都市は、最も安全に己の情報を作り、秘め、発信するために、数百年も自ら結界を張っていた。

しかし、第二次世界大戦中、^{ドイツ}独逸軍の言詞爆弾の爆発により、^{メタフィジクス}時空の連環が生じ、巴里は1944年の1年間を繰り返す二重に閉鎖された都市となってしまった。

そして、時は現在——。米国から重騎士の訓練を受けたベレッタは、曾祖父が残したアティゾール計画を探るため、留学生として、1944年の巴里へと旅立った。

はたしてベレッタという異分子を受け入れた巴里はどう変化していくのか？
独逸占領下の巴里が解放され、連環が消失した時、世界に訪れる真の危機とは!?

川上稔が贈る都市シリーズ第5弾！





かわかみ みのる
川上 稔

1975年1月3日生まれ、東京出身。『パンツァーポリス1935』以来、都市シリーズも5作目を数え、ますます快調。最近チャリンコを買い、夜な夜な街を徘徊している。

【電撃文庫作品】

都市シリーズ

パンツァーポリス1935

エアリアルシティ

風水街都 香港〈上〉〈下〉

蠡楽都市OSAKA〈上〉〈下〉

閉鎖都市 巴里〈上〉

イラスト:さとやす(TENKY)

山形県生まれの栃木育ち。テンキー所属で目下の仕事はポケピに怪しい単語を教えることと挿画。前回ボツった自画像をそのまま使うナイスボーイ(DJ風)であり、今回はやたらとメカと女が多いのでいつも通り人生について…(以下略)



都市シリーズ

開鎖都市・^パリ^リ上



著●川上稔

Closed City - Paris

閉鎖都市 - 巴里 - 上

目次

・序章	「記」	15
・第一章	「雨」	23
・第二章	「報」	65
・第三章	「街」	95
・第四章	「馬奇」	135
・第五章	「書」	155
・第六章	「嬉」	193
・第七章	「夕」	223
・第八章	「心」	245
・第九章	「負」	295
・第十章	「傘」	323
・第十一章	「脚」	337
・第十二章	「戦」	359

連環

重騎
騎乗

ベリック
ハダカ

ハダカ
(39)

凡

この都市は内気である——

1943・1944 < > 1998

カバー・口絵デザイン・CG TENKY
カバー・口絵イラスト・CG さとやす(TENKY)

TENKY
天宮
一ノ
瀬

Character 1

• **Personnage de Paris**

ベレッタ・マクワイルド :Vrai nom:

Beretta



異邦人

:Image:

留学生・重騎士

:Role:

この世界を壊す者

• **Closed City Paris**

Knight Strike

Beretta McWild

Foreigner

Image: Exchange Student – Knight Striker

Role: The one to destroy this world

Character 2

• **P**ersonnage de **P**aris

:Vrai nom: 庇護女帝

Protected Empress



重騎

:Image:

米国製最新雌型重騎

:Role:

人を護る鋼の人形

• **C**losed **C**ity **P**aris

Protected Empress

Heavy Barrel

Image: America’s Latest Female Heavy Barrel

Role: Steel doll that protects people

Characters 3

• **P**ersonnage de **P**aris

ロゼッタ・バルボウ :Vrai nom:

Rosetta



自動人形

:Image:

形式不明自動人形

:Role:

人と鋼の境で迷う者

ed **C**ity **P**aris

Belle de Me
atte

Rosetta Balleroy

Belle de Marionnette

Image: Automaton of Unknown Type

Role: One who wanders between human and steel

Characters 3

• **Personnage de Paris**

:Vrai nom: ギヨーム・バルロウ

Guillaume



抵抗者

:Image:

レジスタンス指導者

:Role:

過去に抗い償う者

Closed City Paris

Resistance

Guilliaum Balleroy

Resister

Image: Resistance Leader

Role: One who fights and makes up for the past

Map

• 1944 années

Plan de Paris

巴里地图

appaltement

ブレッタのアパート

Pl.de la Concord

コンコルド広場

Jardin d's

チュイルリー公園

Palais de Louvre

ルーブル美術館

Allemand,e
独逸軍

te de Paris-Sor
ソルボンヌ大学



Palais des Conferences
Le Bois de Boulogne
バルロウ家



Phillip
フィリップ

Mallette
マレット

P 巴里
地圖
Plan de Paris



Arc de triomphe
凱旋門

Tour Eiffel
エッフェル塔



● 巴里

1:35000

0 0.5mille

アットテクト図法=距離とひずみが超適当

Movie Ad

●記録映画 「四十三年度・学園祭」 試写会ノ報ラセ



— 0 8 —



■本誌記者モ
ツクリ昇天!

●本誌記者二直蹴ヲ放ツベレッタ嬢（スタントマン未使用）

阿鼻叫喚ノ 興奮映像満載

本日、老若男女ノ皆サマニオ報ラセヲイタシマスノハ、当シネマノ完成試写会ヲ二十日午後四時第一学食ニテ行ウトノ情報ニソウロウ。当校映研ノ作業ニ依ッテ得ラレシ音ト光ノ芸術ハ、百三十分全テガ、「飲ンデ壊ス」ノ永久運動。コレハ地獄力極楽力。監督ガ語ルニハ、「史上最強ノ臨場感」トノコトダガ、「ソレシカ無イ」ト事務課ハ試写会ノ強行中止モ検討中。ヤアユカイユカイ。

（5・18 広報部発）
（記者・川上 悠）

Top:

Recorded Movie

“ ’43 School Festival”

Notice of an Advance Screening

Middle of image:

Even our reporter was shocked!

Bottom of image:

Miss Beretta directly kicked our reporter. (No stuntman used)

Bottom:

Full of hellish and exciting footage.

Today we would like to inform you all that an advance screening of this movie will be held in the 1st Cafeteria at 4 PM on the 21st.

Our school’s film studies group has captured the art of sound and light for a full 131 minutes of endless “Drinking and Destruction”. Is this hell or paradise?

According to the director, it provides “history’s greatest sense of realism”, but the administrative division is considering canceling the advance screening because “it’s nothing but that”. Oh, such fun, such fun.

(5/18 – PR Team)

(Translated by: Kawakami Minoru)

Glossary

[Note: The original novel does not include a glossary, but it should make an English translation much more understandable. Kawakami uses different versions of almost every piece of terminology to match the 3 nationalities of the characters (American, French, and German). In Japanese, the kanji below the [ruby text](#) allows the reader to know which terminology is equivalent between languages, but this glossary will have to suffice for the English translation. Not every term has a version for each language and I will keep it updated as the translation progresses.]

Japanese (English Translation): Chain

English: Rondeau

French: Rondeau

German: Metaphysikos

Japanese: Lost Techniques

English: Death Techno

French: Perdus Artifice

German: Ober Geheimnis

Japanese: Genetic Word

English: Live

French: Formule

German: Ton

Japanese: Heavy Knight

English: Knight Striker

French: Lourd de Écrivain

German: Panzer Kavalier

Japanese: Steed

English: Barrel

French: Appareil

German: Panzer

Japanese: Heavy Steed

English: Heavy Barrel

French: Lourd de Marionnette

German: Grösse Panzer

Japanese: Middle Steed

English: Middle Barrel

French: Forma de Marionnette

German: Mittel Panzer

Japanese: Light Steed

English: Light Barrel

French: Léger de Marionnette

German: Klein Panzer

Japanese: Reset

English: Format

French: Primitif

German:

Japanese: Write Piloting

English: Write Bring

French: Recréa

German: Schreiben

Japanese: Word Confirmation Writing

English: Sign

French: Signe

German: Lernen

Japanese: Add Word Writing

English: Point

French: Ajouter

German: Verbesserung

Japanese: Over Emblem

English: Over Emblem

French: Excède Emblème

German:

Japanese: Automaton

English: Sein Frau

French: Belle de Marionnette

German: Sein Frau

Japanese: Feng Shui Master

English: Tuner

French: Correcteur

German: Stimmer

Japanese: Study

English: Study

French: Cabinet

German:

Prologue

The 5th City ◀

開 鎖 都 市

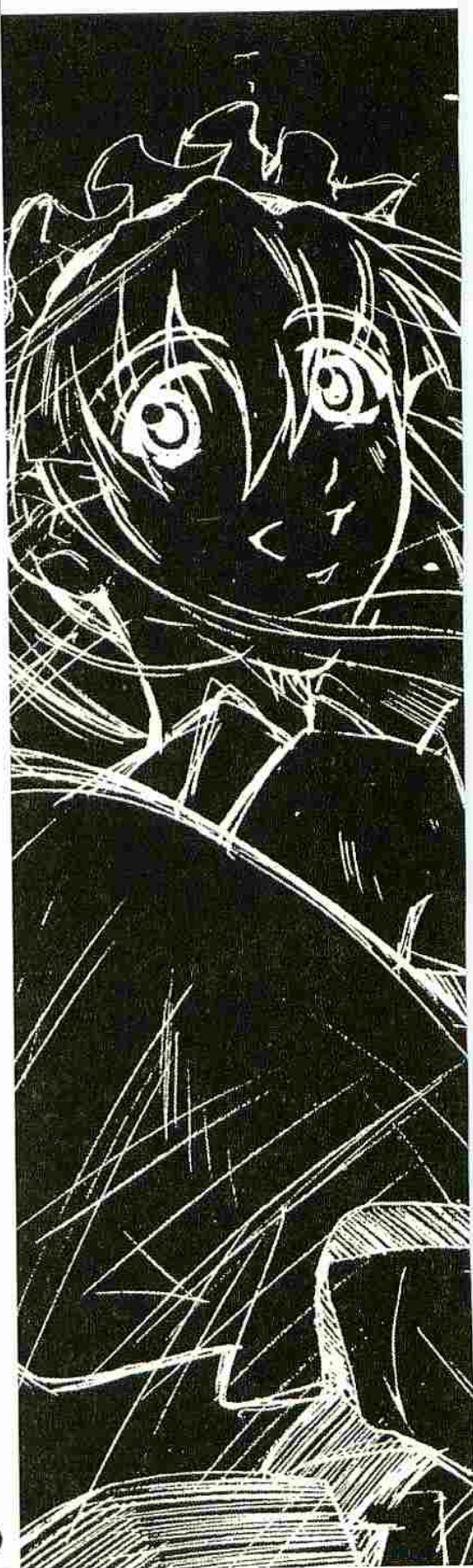
Beretta ◀



▶ 都市シリーズ

巴里

▶ Rosetta



France's World War Two is said to have repeated for 54 years.

But due to the odd correction made to the Metaphysikos in that time, only the "liberators" know of...no, believe in those 54 years of Metaphysikos.

Did that really happen or not?

Why is there almost no trace of it in the modern era?

And why did that Metaphysikos fall apart?

The documents gathered after much investigation have been released based on the unfortunate records of the two girls who were the trigger to the liberation of Paris.

(From the French Royal Historical Society – Modern Division – Committee for the Compilation of Records Concerning Perdus Artifice)

Paris, the world's transmission site.

The powerful individuals who are the source of much information have long gathered and competed in that land.

The power to hide information and the power to transmit information. Medieval alchemy was used to strengthen those two conflicting powers during a period of technological revolution and the alchemists of the time used England's Aerial City as a model to create a barrier around the city.

That barrier allowed them to safely create, hide, and transmit their own information.

And with that, the Formules forming France were changed, creating...

"A world where things exist through accurate notes."

In the centuries since, France sends out thousands of letters and countless news articles on a daily basis to continually send information and trends out into the world. The incidents, words, and human memories created within it are incorporated into its own Formules, allowing it to continually grow like a living creature.

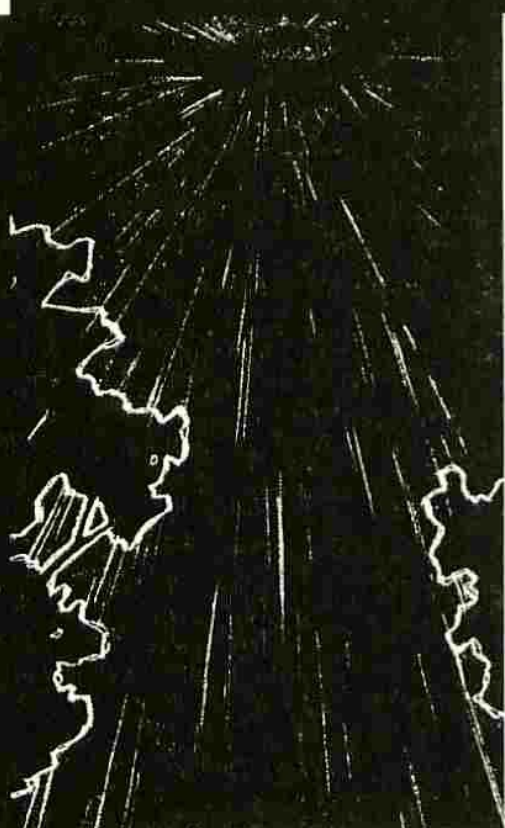
Instead of hiding itself as England does, that city has a duty to inform the world of itself using notes. And it builds up information to evolve.

That city is known as Closed City – Paris.

(From “The Lost World”)

Note: The following records all concern the 54 years of the Metaphysikos and the correction thereof, so some of the related documents and memories of those involved have been remade. This is a hidden history.

Prologue: Recording



序章



「記」

1919・11・30
～1998・06・21

そこに、
黒い傘を差した、
一人の男がいた——。



11/30/1919 – 06/21/1998

A man stood holding a black umbrella.

11/30/1919

An Anecdote from Mallette Harculia

It was midday on the 24th day since the end of World War One.

A cold rain had been falling since the night before and Panzerpolis – Berlin remained wet even during the day.

The rain fell equally on all parts of the city.

On the burned urban region, on the broken factory region, and on the graveyards where people slept.

One such graveyard existed in the Tempelhof Park on the west side of Berlin's urban region. The rain fell coldly even on that lawn lined with dark-colored gravestones.

There was a roaring as an airplane took off into the rainy sky. It was leaving the Tempelhof Airport adjacent to the park. As the airport of a losing nation, all the planes taking off and landing were foreign.

The plane was hazy in the rain, but it still passed over the graveyard and cast its shadows on it.

As the shadow raced across the lawn and trees, it also passed over something living.

A skinny middle-aged man was sitting there. He wore a German army uniform, but the right sleeve was empty. His left eye had been lost from a blade wound. But the medal on his chest was intent on being noticed as it gave off a solid metallic light.

He was a wounded soldier.

He did not react at all to the shadow passing by overhead. He simply remained down on one knee in front of a gravestone. He would occasionally touch the tree next to the gravestone (a white flowered one) in silence.

Another airplane passed by overhead.

A crow cawed in response from the forest.

The man moved, perhaps in response to the bird cry.

He removed the medal on his chest with his remaining left hand, squeezed it in his fist, and then started placing it on the branch from which the white flowers grew.

At that moment, someone spoke to him.

“We can’t have you throwing that away, Lieutenant Heinz Berge.”

The man, Heinz, said nothing in response, but he did quickly stand up. Water splashed at his feet and he turned around as if swinging his empty right sleeve around him.

His one eye turned toward where a man stood holding a black umbrella.

Heinz asked a question when he saw the man’s face.

“...Is this a condolence call? I’m fairly certain I have no more family left.”

“This is no condolence call, Lieutenant.”

“Then what is it?”

“I am here to take you with me. You should have received a letter last night... I am with the Geheimnis Agency.”

Heinz briefly forgot to put on a facial expression when he heard that.

After just a few seconds, the scar over his left eye bent. An inappropriate smile formed on his lips and his right eye looked to his right sleeve.

His smiling lips spoke as they drank the rain.

“The Geheimnis Agency, huh? ...That agency seeks a country which does not rely on the wisdom of god or the technology of the past, so what do you hope

to accomplish by giving a Panzer to a crippled Panzer Kavalier? Not to mention that our entire country's military is going to be shrunk soon. I doubt you can even prepare me a new Panzer."

"Not to worry. The Geheimnis Agency holds a position higher than the occupying army."

"Oh?" Heinz nodded once as if hanging his head and then said more. "I heard 70% of your ranks were consumed by an attack from the British army during the Great War."

"But 100% of the enemy was consigned to the abyss. ...Our technology is 50 years ahead of theirs."

"And what do you want me to do with that technology?"

"As stated in our letter, you will be given the title of the strongest."

Heinz looked up into the sky when he heard that.

A poem escaped his lips.

That which is filled with the blue sky.

That which is covered by the red dirt.

I name thee heaven and earth.

Where the wind howls bravely.

Where the sand dances gently.

I view thee as heaven and earth.

So that no one would grieve again.

That which is endless and cannot be grasped.

That which is vast and cannot be held.

I am with thee.

Hearing that poem, the man in black spoke quietly.

"That is the Panzer Kavalier's song, isn't it? ...The song of the Panzer Kavalier whose duty is to protect people."

And he said more.

“But the blue sky, the red dirt, the wind, and the sand cannot be found here.”

“No, they can’t.”

Heinz Berge agreed and lowered his gaze.

He tilted his head slightly, looked to the gravestone, and asked a question.

“About the letter last night... If I take part in this Panzer Ritter Project of yours, you really will erase my emotions when you give me a fully artificial body, right? To ensure I make accurate decisions.”

“Yes, you will lose all memories unrelated to combat.”

“Everything, including today?”

“Most likely.”

“I see.”

Heinz looked away from the gravestone and began to walk.

The rain picked up as he did so.

After a few steps, he passed by the man in black, so that man quickly followed.

“Are you accepting our offer?”

Heinz did not nod. He simply faced forward in the rain.

The rain grew ever stronger.

And then his voice entered that rain.

“I no longer need the blue sky, the red dirt, the wind, the sand...”

He took a breath.

“Or grief.”

6/21/1998

**Excerpt from the Paris Region Exchange Student Consent Form –
1998 Edition**

Everything was closed off by the Rondeau.

Paris is best known as a textual world that exists through journal entries, but it has another trait as well.

As I am sure you know, the entirety of France is still repeating a year from World War Two.

It happened near the end of World War Two. Specifically, 5:32:18 of August 6, 1944 when Allied Forces fought to liberate Paris. The German Wort Bombe taken to Paris was detonated. Even the Formules of space-time were altered by the explosion and France was closed away. So every year, the Primitif takes affect at that time and everything is reverted to their state from one year before.

Starting in '63, Detroit's Formule analysis technology has made it possible to enter that closed space, but the inside has been fully repeating the time from August of '43 to August of '44.

Yes, just like finishing a book and re-reading it from the beginning.

The people caught in Paris's Primitif are unaware they are repeating the same year over and over, so they have tried to do the exact same things 54 times now. You, the exchange student, will enter that era as "something extra". You will be unable to leave until you are "expelled" by the detonation of the Wort Bombe in a year's time. And as the city itself has an immune system, you can

only enter once in your lifetime. If you die inside, your very existence will be wholly annihilated by the Primitif.

Each year, France's immune system grows stronger, so what we can send inside is only growing more limited. If we can no longer send anything inside, Paris will become a truly shy city that no one can enter.

But that is an unavoidable fate.

France is connected to '44, so if it is liberated, it will recover back in '44 rather than here in '98. If that happens, this world which has evolved as a "France-less world" ever since '44 will be erased as a 54 year paradox.

Thus, we cannot liberate France and we must create a backup.

This is a global problem.

And no matter how much that era is altered, it is reset a year later by the Primitif. But you will not lose what you gained there. Do not forget that.

Chapter 1: Rain



第一章

「雨」

1944・02・21

この世界にいる人達と、
私達は、
違うんだ——。

02/21/1944

We aren't like the people in this world.

2/21/1944

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's Memory Bank

I performed a Write Bring.

That is, I completely broke down the Lives of my body and combined them with the Lives of the 8-yard-tall Heavy Barrel.

It was to grow stronger.

Everyone knew that a Knight Striker's duty was to use that strength to protect people.

Doing so required stripping naked, entering the conversion device known as the Study, and to hold a powerful desire to combine with this thing.

You couldn't find this sense of actual battle in Heavy Barrel class at college and I hadn't felt it since arriving as an "exchange student".

Just a few seconds before, my body was broken down into nothingness inside the Study and it was now passing through the intricate conductive panels and tubes to spread through the machine's cylinders, frames, and sense devices for sight and hearing.

I felt like I had mechanical flesh and blood.

Borrowing the machine body brought an incredible high of objectivity. I "Signed" what my will was doing by writing it to the Heavy Barrel's memory bank.

I had to use powerful thoughts to write down everything that happened. Yes,

this city was a textual world where things would disappear if not written down, making it a contrast to Aerial City – London.

To use London's terminology, things only existed once they were Opened.

Sound, taste, and everything else only existed once they were written down.

That was why I focused on the fact that I had performed a Write Bring.

I used that awareness to Sign that fact, which allowed me to continue to exist.

I wrote that my feet could feel the cold floor.

And once I wrote it, my feet really did feel the cold.

At the same time, the Heavy Barrel's armored will directly sent a system message to my will.

"Write Bring complete."

I had interfered in my own Lives to combine with the 8-yard Heavy Barrel that had a will of its own.

The memory bank was currently in Continuous Complete Sign Mode. That was normally only used during military action, but in this city, nothing I did would happen unless I wrote it down.

In this textual world, you had to constantly express yourself or you would disappear.

For the time being, I wanted to remain in the high of having my thoughts leaking out.

"Sight Devices: Sign."

I opened my eyes.

In this textual world that existed on paper, the Heavy Barrel's visual receptors viewed things using printed drawings or text. But I wasn't skilled enough to express myself using drawings, so I had to write down what I saw in text to see this world.

I could create my own reality in this city by Signing a "1st person narration". Even if I didn't find a certain document, I could Sign that I did find it and that would mean I had found it.

But there was also an “actual reality” separate from my own opinion of whether or not I found the document.

To “Point” was to insert that objective “actual reality” into my own narration.

In battle, what I and my opponent wanted to do were the competing Signs and the actual result was the Point. If all I did was Sign my own actions, my and my opponent’s actions would fall out of sync.

And what happened then?

The one with more accurate information would win.

That was why you would think you had won and all of a sudden find yourself defeated.

On the other hand, while you were Pointing the surrounding information in this world, where being written was to exist, you couldn’t do anything yourself.

If you spent a line Pointing, that was a line in which you couldn’t Sign. So you couldn’t just sit around Pointing the reality around you. You had to Sign if you were to do anything yourself.

So I made a quick Point of the current situation.

<I am inside a large and dimly-lit wooden warehouse.> I see. Then this time I’ll Sign that I’m inside there.

Umm, I’m on my knees, but my gaze is really high up. The bottom of the warehouse’s sheet iron roof is just barely above my head...I think.

Before I did the Write Bring, the pile of wooden containers had looked like a wall, but from this viewpoint it looked surprising small. The warehouse was large enough for a small ship to fit inside, but it was no more than a backyard shed for an 8-yard giant.

But this wasn’t the time for that.

I was so focused on the Write Bring that I had forgotten what I needed to do: escape the warehouse with the Heavy Barrel.

The current situation was, um...

Oh, right. Wasn’t there a searchlight shining on me from outside?

<A blinding light arrived suddenly.>

The light lit up my metal skin...oh, no. I'm naked. This girl isn't wearing an armor dress. But there was no point in acting tough and telling people not to stare, so I just looked away.

I looked down.

I knew the 5 corpses of the Resistance members I had been working with were down there. There was a lot of blood.

Wait...oops. They might have still been alive, but after what happened, I carelessly Signed them as corpses...

I might have been wrong, so I tried Pointing.

<Just as expected, 5 corpses are lying on the concrete floor.

There is a lot of blood.>

Ugh.

Oh, no. The Heavy Barrel itself is probably reacting and working with the Write Bring to give me an emotional high. Both the Lives of my body and my will had completely synched, so if my emotions got worked up...

Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's System Message

Emphasis of Write Bring user's thoughts confirmed. Beginning mind sympathy preparations for the body.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's Memory Bank

——Dammit!!

I just remembered.

Three days before in the library, the Resistance man known as Bluebeard had scouted me out and asked if I could test out the Heavy Barrel they had snuck in from outside.

I can't believe it.

And I was told so many times during the exchange student testing that I wasn't to get involved in anything deadly.

We aren't like the people in this world.

I was too naïve.

And this was the result.

Just as we finished the initial preparations for this girl, the German Army had surrounded us like they were waiting for that moment. A firefight had broken out all at once. The Resistance crew I had known for only a few hours had shoved me into the Study to keep this girl alive. Since they were all spies and Resistance members, none of them had given their real names.

There was the man known as Bluebeard, Spirit who treated me like a kid, the unwomanly Calamity, Napoleon who had seemed like a little brother, and Emperor who always seemed to be looking for a fight, but they were all collapsed on the floor now.

Bluebeard's team had probably been wiped out.

The only survivor was the anachronistic Knight Striker girl who was not even an official part of the Resistance.

I can't believe it.

Why did I survive? They were the ones working so hard to liberate France, so they should have been the ones to survive. ...So why?

I wanted to Sign something more convenient, but I decided against it.

I had to move.

"Hearing Devices: Sign."

Oh, gunfire. They must think we still have some soldiers left.

Did that mean they weren't going to enter the warehouse quite yet? This was my chance to get moving.

They had briefly shined their light on it, but they wouldn't think the Heavy Barrel could move right away.

Sorry, everyone.

Farewell. I'll bring some flowers and come see you some time.

But first I had to help them out by hiding this girl where the German Army couldn't reach her and then make sure I survived myself.

And then I would never again Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel for no good reason.

I had to remember why I had come to this city as an exchange student and get serious about that. I had to focus on reading the letters my grandma had given me and pursue the identity of the Attesor Project that my great-grandfather Jack McWild had left behind.

I can't believe it.

Luck simply had not been on my side recently. Mallette had grown more distant after getting a guy and that idiot Phillip had been made an honorary officer in the German Army despite being from the Chevalier de Paris family line. Why did the people living in this era insist on doing the exact same thing as in the records we had made?

<More gunfire is heard.>

Sorry, everyone.

I'm going to fully activate my body. HLF087 13-LL Protected Empress, can you hear me?

"Spirit Engine – Direct Link Complete."

Good, good. Now my heart is active and not just my mind and senses.

I'll run out and hide you in a handy spot. Then I'll leave the Study.

Let's go with that.

I stood up.

The sheet iron roof could not contain the power of the curved cylinders that moved me.

My head and the backpack I wore pushed on the roof to crash right through it.

Crash.

...Maybe I Signed too light a sound there.

But the roof had to have been blown away. The ceiling only had its framework left and my upper body stuck out into the night air. Umm, how were things outside? Was it raining? Yeah, it was.

Then I'll write that.

It was raining.

When I stood up, my view widened considerably. To the left was an art museum's large warehouse, identical to the one that had been hiding me. To the right was the Seine, wet with the night rain.

This was a sandbank of the Seine. It was near the city hall.

How was I supposed to escape?

While I asked myself that, I shuddered from the rain dripping down my metal skin.

Why did I have such poor focus anyway? I really only needed to Sign what was absolutely necessary, but I was getting more and more carried away with it. I was waking up.



I looked forward.

I Signed.

I thought the searchlight would be shining directly on me through the rain, so I half-closed my ground-directed sight devices to bear with the brightness.

And I Pointed.

<There are two armored trucks in front of the warehouse. There is a full company of military police.>

Despite it being night and raining, they were bustling around and looking up at me.

Can I hear their voices?

“It’s a Grösse Panzer!”

Let’s just say they were shouting something like that.

You can tell it’s a Heavy Barrel just by looking at it, can’t you? If you’ve got a problem with the Heavy Barrel, then I’m heading out there to show you what’s what, you bastard.

The 1st step.

This was my first time Write Bringing into a curved cylinder style of Heavy Barrel. You could say this girl was the first one I’d used for real, so I couldn’t get the pace quite right. The legs weren’t anywhere near as heavy as I’d expected and I was surprised at how well they moved.

The 2nd step.

I’m guessing this Heavy Barrel was meant for my grandma to use. She was in Paris 55 years ago. She had been young, but after demonstrating her skill as a Knight Striker, she had become an American spy and infiltrated the city as an exchange student.

The 3rd step.

But she became one of the First Erased, so Paris continued its Format without her information included and I was thus able to Write Bring into this girl now.

The 4th step.

I checked my footing a little. I moved forward while making sure not to step on the others. I had already reached the warehouse's entrance, so I destroyed the roof's frame with my left fist.

Ow, ow. The hand structure is surprisingly delicate.

And...

<The armored trucks are facing this way. They have machineguns on the roof.>

That ain't good. My current skin was a Pearl Coat with detailed emblems. It was strong against wide-range weapons, but it was weak against actual bullets. I think the armor dress was still inside its container.

Hmm.

I didn't have time to put it on, so I had to keep on going.

The 5th step.

My legs' curved cylinders sank low as I continued forward.

I used that to shift into a run for the 6th step.

I leaned forward and dashed.

There were about 17 yards between the warehouse and the enemy formation. Since I was 8 yards tall at the moment, that was only 3 steps. But I didn't get careless and Pointed for just a moment.

<The armored trucks fire.>

Whoops. Now that was good timing.

I held up my right hand.

The lower arm was a large shield with a Valkyrie Strike pile bunker contained inside. The giant metal shield was hit by a *Lanze* that could probably destroy a light tank, but it was deflected.

I'll write here that the sound reminded me of the glass instrument I had heard at the modern art museum.

It was actually an awfully unpleasant noise, though. Wait, there's no point in

lying if I also write that here.

Well, whatever.

The armored trucks fired more, but it was no use. No use at all. I had a shield. It would just be a repeat of last time. ...And while they were doing that, I arrived!!

<I charged into the enemy formation. An armored truck is right in front of me.>

It was only the size of a puppy from my point of view. And if a puppy tried to bite you, it needed to be punished.

I decided to send it flying with a kick I'd learned from my former Knight Striker of a grandma. Let's do this like I'm playing soccer.

I got it good using the curved cylinders of the ankle.

It felt nice.

This girl was pretty sturdy. Wondering how it had turned out, I Pointed.

<The armored truck was crushed as it flew away from you kick.>

OK, OK. Let's say it caused a nice splash when it fell right into the Seine.

And that there are screams all around.

Oh, shut up. Men aren't supposed to shriek like that. I don't think my comrades screamed.

Then I Pointed to the side.

<The other armored truck is withdrawing.>

Don't run, you fool.

I stuck my toes below it and cheaply flipped it over. It wasn't even worth checking with a Point. I knew it had flipped over.

But the heavy armored truck had felt awfully light. This girl had a lot of power. She was the best and the strongest of any I'd piloted before.

<The ankle is undamaged.>

Damn, she's sturdy. I see. I guess I should've expected that from a special

order F-number.

I could see why she had been worth bringing even just one of them into the city. Just as Bluebeard had said, she might have been a great asset toward liberating Paris. Heavy Barrels had always been more about being a symbol and raising morale than about their pure strength. I was sure her Over Emblem was powerful too.

To put it another way, things would be bad indeed if she was taken away.

Germany and Europe as a whole had yet to develop curved cylinder tech and I didn't want history to take that turn, even if it was just for this one loop.

Now, then. Time to run away.

Some guys were probably shooting submachineguns my way down below, but they couldn't even scratch me at that caliber.

If you wanna fight me, get some real equipment first.

But for now, toodeloo.

The bridges weren't blockaded and the moon wasn't out, so it was time to escape Paris real quick!!

Rosetta's Journal: Today's Entry #1

It is very noisy outside the mansion

But despite that I am writing my journal entry for the day just as the master told me to It is eight in the evening which is when I always write my journal entry The master ate dinner and went to the second floor

While eating he said something about the German Army occupying Paris but I did not understand since I seldom leave the mansion He sometimes talks about this city and he said something odd today It had to do with August 6

He said he learned a lot from a Correcteur friend of his but I did not understand any of it After talking about that or about the German Army or about his own past the master always goes up to the second floor He has ordered me not to go up there

I am only allowed on the first floor rooms and hallways and kitchen and the mansion cellar and the mansion yard and the storehouse and the backyard and the yard cellar and the water well I always use an Ajouter to watch him climb the stairs with only one leg He lost a leg doing something or other long before I was made Everything was normal today so I am writing my journal entry like normal I am writing all the normal things

The master left in the morning like normal and returned in the evening like normal Just like yesterday I predict this entry will end at 35 lines I will write about the weather I watched with Ajouters throughout the day It was raining since the morning today

I will write what I see with an Ajouter now

<I can hear noise out the window

A loud sound much like the noon bell is repeating too many times to count I see some red light outside on occasion>

That is not fire because the red is more like the color of my tie <I hear the master shouting down from the second floor He is saying to close the shutters because this is dangerous> The master uses the word dangerous a lot but I do not know what it means It apparently refers to a situation that requires closing the shutters but I have never seen a dangerous situation since I seldom leave the mansion <Two more red lights appear outside the window

Another sound can be heard within the pouring rain out the window> Some food delivery men brought some corn over three days ago and this sounds a lot like when that was cooked over the fire The master smiled for once when he saw the white result of the corn swelling out even larger than it already was He said a dead friend of his had liked that food

I remember that because he normally looks frightening me when he talks about that person but three days ago was an exception I will close the shutters before writing the rest but I do wonder what is happening outside

German Army Paris Branch Telegram: To the German Army Military Police

Urgent.

1 unidentified American-made Grösse Panzer of model HFF Unknown is fleeing west at 30 mph from a warehouse near the Théâtre du Châtelet. Use the above information to Verbesserung its form onto the document as soon as possible. Send the Special Police 8th Platoon to the scene and send the 6th Platoon to western Paris. The combat number is 431021-18P. The 6th Platoon must confirm its equipment and has permission to fire. We look forward to your results. There was some firing at the scene. Enemy casualties: 5 killed (all of them). Own casualties: 2 killed, 18 wounded. Provide aid and confirm the status of the scene. Pursue the fleeing enemy. Over.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's Memory Bank

I felt so cold with the rain directly hitting my body.

Running around naked doesn't feel so great, so I shut down my senses.

"Sense resonance system: lowest setting."

Good, good. Now it's just the sexy feeling of water droplets dripping down my skin.

Anyway, I needed to run as far away as I could get through the streets of Paris. I was pretty tall, but the *appartements* around here were tall enough to hide me if they were a street away.

But after shining their light on me before, they might have Pointed my detailed appearance. If so, this girl would be wanted for the rest of her life. Written descriptions were everything in this city, so you could fix something's existence in place by accurately describing it. Even if they didn't know this girl's model number, it would be bad if they completely Pointed its form.

This is no fun at all~

But anyway, um, what's this? It couldn't be fun for them either. When I Pointed earlier, there were sirens blaring all over, so good luck, I guess. I wanted to say something too, but I couldn't.

"Voice device: Sign impossible."

She didn't seem to have a voice component installed. Well, we were attacked in the middle of putting her together.

But that didn't affect my performance, so it was all good. My thoughts were written to the memory bank plenty fast and there was no echoing. If I had to point to a fault, it was a good body, but it was a little too honest. If I started up

the Full Drive, I suspected it would respond too much and my mind wouldn't be able to keep up with the body's movements.

But really, I'm sorry, everyone. I was right to Write Bring. If I hadn't combined my Lives with this body...no, with this girl, I would've died and then we really would've been wiped out.

So I had to escape. As long as I wasn't caught, this girl's origin would remain a mystery to the Germans.

I was a little worried about the fact that the knowledge of Paris I had memorized before arriving as an exchange student had included nothing about an incident on this night. That meant this was a change to history.

It was a temporary change that would be erased by the Format on August 6, 1944.

I had made a few changes already.

I took part in a Heavy Barrel battle at the year-end festival. I was the neighbor of Mallette Harculia, the prodigal daughter of a wealthy Jewish merchant. And I had a bit of a personal relationship with Phillip Missel, who infiltrates the German Army as a part of the Resistance and meets an untimely death. I even kissed him.

But this was the biggest change. After all, people had died. And I was on the run.

I couldn't forget that I absolutely had to survive this.

The problem was that I only had two pieces of equipment: the Valkyrie Strike on my right arm and the Over Emblem activated with the emblem on the body's surface. The gun barrel from which the Heavy Barrel got its name was still in its box back in the warehouse.

But oddly enough, I wasn't afraid. My grandma had trained me, so I had experience with battle from a young age. Back in '98, I had enjoyed messing with our vigilante Heavy Barrel just as much as maintaining Sein Fraus for the family business.

Oh, where's the enemy? I had a bad feeling.

<I hear an engine.>

I only had the lower sight devices open, so I opened the compound eyes as well.

“Primary sight devices: Sign.”

My vision widened and I shuddered. I loved this view.

And I saw it.

<A platoon of military police has formed up on the street.> Sorry, but you’re too close, so I’ve gotta charge right in. I’ll kick you out of the way without killing you, so don’t move!!

I raced forward.

I crashed into them and passed right on through.

I said “crash” myself, but my hearing picked up a much worse sound. Yeah, I really am sorry. I just can’t seem to hold back.

Why is that? Well, when I Write Bring into a Barrel, the conversion device breaks down the Lives of my original body and combines them with those of the Barrel’s body, so, um, how should I put it? I’m not wearing an armor dress or anything else right now. I feel like I’m naked and I’d love to cover my chest, but my right arm has the Valkyrie Strike and I can’t allow you to capture me. Ha ha ha.

Laughing seemed to help calm me down a little.

And I needed to escape somewhere.

I was headed west, so I decided to turn left and head toward the Boulogne Park. If I could cross the river there, I was pretty sure I could lose them. Not that I wanted to swim through that dirty river naked.

Meanwhile, the Arc de Triomphe came into view in the distance.

This was a rainy night, but they had it lit up. It was pretty. It was strange how the German Army understood its charm.

It was about time for the enemy to be showing up, so I made a Point.

<A platoon of special police has formed up on the street. They are prepared

to attack the approaching Heavy Barrel.> Hey, wait!! I was way too late on that dangerous Point!

This isn't good! If they're ready to attack-...!!

Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's System Message

Due to an impact, the Write Bring user's thought connection has been shut down for 0.00000002 seconds.

Restarting.

Special Police 6th Platoon Telegram: To German Military Police HQ

Urgent.

Report on 431021-18P. We have intercepted the unidentified American-made Grösse Panzer of model HFF Unknown. By our Lernen, 15 T-Gew anti-tank rifles fired three Lanze which did medium damage to its right femur. The target has changed course and has entered the Boulogne Forest to the southwest. Its speed is mid-level. The area has cultural value, so we await instructions on whether or not to send the armored trucks in. The road at the interception point received minor damage, so we have called in a Stimmer Unit. Over.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Protected Empress's Memory Bank

I somehow managed to get into the forest of Boulogne Park.

The pursuing sirens were really annoying, so I really wished I had the gun barrel on the shoulder to fire back at them, but I just didn't have the proper equipment this time and I had no backup. I could never destroy the stationed German troops with one incomplete Heavy Barrel. What a pain.

But my right thigh really hurt where they had shot me. Write Bringing into a Heavy Barrel meant to fully combine with it, so any damage to it would remain with me when I released the Write Bring.

When I left the Study, I'd have a full-on bullet wound in my right thigh, goddammit. Those guys really don't know how to treat a girl's skin.

Inside a forest taller than I was, I ran down a stone path only meant for carriages.

The rain was cold and my wound hurt.

I had stopped shutting down my senses, so the cold, the exhaustion, and the pain all violated my Lives.

If I cut off my senses, I wouldn't be able to tell how bad the wound was. There was currently a bullet hole in the right thigh made of an American curved cylinder frame. I could feel the lubricant oil gradually leaking out, so it felt like I was bleeding.

The leg would stop moving after a while. I belonged to a family of Sein Frau technicians and my Knight Striker grandma had taught me everything she knows, so I could tell. If I shut down the senses here, I was done for. I wouldn't be able to tell how far the damage would grow.

I had to use my pain to consider how far I could run.

I Pointed to see if the enemy was around.

<Your mechanical feet step on a stone in the path.> Oh, ow, ow. Was that stone there for decoration? Don't leave those things in the middle of the walkway. I don't know if it's supposed to be art or what, but I'm gonna destroy it if it's in my way. Or rather, it was right in front of me, so I destroyed it. It only took an instant. Man, that's a really dangerous ideology I've got going there. But it isn't quite as cool when I'm on the run.

I ran.

My injury, the chill of the air, the sound of the rain, the rustling of the forest. They all came together into a single sensation... Am I a poet or what? But really my thoughts just happened to flow together pretty well there.

Anyway, time to Point the upcoming intersection!!

<A black Middle Barrel is entering the intersection.

It is an MMP055 07-LC Jagdhund. It is the German Army's average Barrel with a black coloration and large shoulders.> That was close, but I caught it in time. A Middle Barrel showed up, but it was a cheap one. If you're gonna send it to Paris, get yourself a higher quality Barrel. Do you really think that mass produced P-number stands a chance against my special-ordered F-number?

Well, I will admit a Middle Male (MM) model has a bigger frame than a Heavy Lady (HL) model like mine.

And as I wrote that, I reached the enemy.

Your mistake was not knowing the movable range of your own head.

The Jagdhund have a heavy frame to support their own weight, so the neck vertebrae can barely turn to the side at all. So at an intersection like this, you needed to face your enemy and walk out sideways, but you didn't, did you!?

I Signed that you didn't!

If you think otherwise, then prove it by dodging this!!

I stepped forward.

I charged toward my opponent's left side.

I used the ram at the end of my right arm's Valkyrie Strike to hit their side.

And right as I made the attack, I Pointed their movements!!

<It hit.>

The Rare Material ram easily pierced the cheap armor and the metal body wobbled.

I fired the right side of the two installed Valkyrie Strike spears.

It was a solid hit. It pierced right through with the pile bunker motion.

But that wasn't gonna cut it at all. With a slight time lag, I pushed my right arm out further, retracted the right side spear, and fired the left side one.

<The left spear pierces the center of the opponent's chest at an angle.> I decided to make extra sure.

I gathered strength in my outstretched right arm and focused on its details. The emblem engraved in the skin reacted to its own Message and the strength of the Write Bring user's will, so ether was concentrated there.

This was the original version of a Panzer Emblem. An Over Emblem caused an ether weapon to appear on a portion of the armor. That portion became an ether weapon by converting its Lives into something other than a Heavy Barrel.

My heart cried out.

I needed my will and my emotions. I controlled all of the pleasure I felt at being able to perfectly control myself through the Write Bring. And the emblem realized that power.

<The Valkyrie Strike on the right arm has transformed into a giant spear with bluish-white light surrounding it.

The bottom end sticking back behind the elbow is more than 6 yards long. Including the spear tip, it is a spike more than 8 yards long.

The Protected Empress's Over Emblem "Spartaness" has been fully summoned to the right arm.

The glowing spear has the same functions as the original device.> In other words, it was a pile bunker.

I fired the large spear toward the Middle Barrel in front of me.

A spear of light raced along fixed rails of the same substance and it struck the Middle Barrel while emitting a spray of light.

The Middle Barrel was blown away more by the impact than it was pierced.

<The glowing spear has vanished.

The fallen Barrel crushed the armored truck behind it.> Okay, I checked everything with a Point, so it's time to get out of here.

I felt a slight tingling in my right arm. My will may have weakened a little. Historically, very few Knight Strikers could activate a full body Over Emblem and I could only manage it on a single part of my body. My emotions were too weak.

But I could look for ways to improve myself later. An injured girl on the run was a beautiful thing, but it became nothing more than a farce when she started beating up everyone after her.

I ran and ran.

It might be a little late to be saying it now, but I kind of hoped the soldier Write Bringed into that Middle Barrel hadn't died. He should've been fine if he had immediately canceled the Write Bring, but...well, it wasn't worth worrying about. I had to focus on escaping.

I couldn't use the river with my injured leg.

If possible, I wanted to leave this girl somewhere in the forest, get dressed in a hurry, and erase the thoughts that were being automatically recorded like this.

I just needed to find somewhere that would give me even 10 minutes of peace.

I kept running.

But the pain in my leg was definitely getting worse. It was due to that battle. If my grandma back in 1998 San Francisco had seen that pathetic battle, she'd probably kill me.

Dammit. Meanwhile, I saw a wall beyond a road cutting through the forest.

A wall? No, think carefully. There's no wall here. Signing lies isn't going to help you. Umm, oh, right. The map I studied before arriving in Paris said there was a hill here. It was a dirt hill with a bit of grass on it and a bunch of white flowers at the bottom.

<There is a large mansion at the top of the hill.> ...Eh?

Huh? That's not right.

I didn't learn anything about this mansion...

Wait, this isn't the time to worry about that! What should I do? Circle around the hill and escape!?

Or...?

Rosetta's Journal: Today's Entry #2

Tonight we had a strange guest named Beretta

Correction

She is Lady Beretta

I have determined I should refer to people politely even in writing I cannot determine how to explain why she visited us tonight At times like that I will do as the master once told me and simply write out what happened in order I walked out into the hallway with a light in hand to close the shutters My Ajouter told me it was noisy outside and that something like loud footsteps were approaching Those footsteps stopped and then it was like the sky had fallen into the mansion courtyard The courtyard is surrounded by the mansion so it can only be accessed through the mansion But something fell from the sky just as I made an Ajouter It was a large machine

It was a machine just like my own body but it was far larger Its arms were much like the largest false arm I have

Its legs were much like the largest false legs I have I used to have a similar waist back before my growth through the Coppelia effect My body can no longer function to my satisfaction without being closer to that of a human This clearly had a much larger body since my body is not large enough to crush the courtyard pond I decided to call for the master because he decides what happens in the mansion and what I do But a person left the back of the machine before I could call for him It was Lady Beretta

Her white and red clothing seemed to glow in the rain She headed for the north entrance so I went that way as well Lady Beretta opened the door and entered the mansion just as I stepped the northern hallway She held a large bag in her hand and she collapsed on the spot I did not know what to do so I stopped making Ajouters and propped her up Unlike the usual food delivery

men she did not name herself and she asked me to shelter her I did not know what that meant

I picked her up and carried her to the bottom of the stairs to call for the master When the master descended the stairs he said the wooden box he held contained tools for repairing humans On his instructions I carried Lady Beretta to the living room and laid her down on the sofa I made an Ajouter and found my false arms had the red soup of a juice that comes out of meat while preparing it so I felt the need to wash up The master pulled up her skirt and began repairing her I will now write down all of his questions and her responses while he repaired her Are you not you going to ask who I am or if I am with the Resistance Why would I bother asking that of a Lourd de Écrivain who was piloting an Allied Lourd de Marionnette But I am not part of the Resistance

Are you saying a civilian was piloting that

Well it is kind of a long story

From there Lady Beretta told the long story

While she was being repaired she explained how she ended up using that machine and the master nodded after hearing her out I will now write down what they said

Why would you tell me all that

As selfish as it is I was hoping you could make a decision for me A decision about what

Whether you are with the Resistance or not I want you to decide what you are going to do about that girl in the courtyard and me Why must I make that decision

Her leg is damaged and she cannot move any more but leaving her here could drag you and your maid into this whole mess What would you do if I decided the only way to stay out of this is to hand you over to the Germans I would fight it like hell and if I was still caught I would apologize to the others who died I see

If you are going to hand me over to them then just open the window and shout down to them They are wandering around at the bottom of the hill so hurry up and decide if you are going to hand me over or not Pipe down while I

try to think little girl

If you are going to hand me over to them then stop healing me because I am not going to have you staring at my leg like this if you are only going to turn me in If you do not quiet down I really will throw you to the Germans Oh so you are not planning to do it for the time being Hmm I do not like something about this

The master spent a long time thinking and eventually decided to shelter Lady Beretta He repaired her relatively quickly and he said she would not even have a scar afterwards She seemed to still have trouble using her leg so I attached my large false arm meant for carrying things and carried her to the bath On the way she saw the large machine collapsed in the courtyard and asked me my name I told her my name

She told me to put her down in front of the bath and I complied She reached out her hand and grabbed my hand

She said thank you but I did not understand why she was thanking me since I had only done what my master instructed me to But that question was immediately erased from my mind when I made an Ajouter and saw Lady Beretta smiling for the first time It was unlike how the master smiles and it told me why she had thanked me Even if I was only following my orders Lady Beretta was glad that I had worked for her sake I think that is what her smile was expressing

This might trigger the Coppelia effect so that I can smile when someone does something for me I do not know if that is a good thing but gaining more functions is a good thing It is about time for Lady Beretta to leave the bath

It has been 40 minutes which is 4 times as long as the master takes She may have a lot of places to wash

The master covered the machine in the courtyard using a sheet from the storehouse I tried to help but he ordered me to write this journal entry and to look after Lady Beretta Lady Beretta will apparently sleep here tonight and go home early tomorrow morning I will now bring Lady Beretta a change of my clothes

Then I have to get to the kitchen

I only have to reheat something so I can finish before she dresses That ends this journal entry

I wrote a lot today

I doubt as much will happen tomorrow so fewer lines should suffice I will write another entry tomorrow because that is one of my jobs

Beretta's Journal

Today I'm writing with the view from a 1st floor guest room instead of the usual elevated view from my *appartement*. I'm feeling pretty good after getting a bath and some dinner, but my mood is not exactly great.

What am I supposed to do tomorrow?

The old man who healed me will apparently repair the Heavy Barrel. (He claims to be a Knight Striker himself.) He hasn't asked all that much about my identity either, so who even knows.

I was only involved in the Resistance for 3 days, but it looks like I'm back to my usual life. Maybe I should think of it as a valuable experience as an exchange student. At least the changes to history will end here.

Maybe I just haven't calmed down yet. I took part in combat back in America when I helped out the city's vigilante group a few times and I've fought a triple digit number of mock battles.

I think it's really hitting me hard that people died because of me. I shouldn't have agreed to that just because I was itching to Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel again. After assembling it and doing a test run, I was supposed to officially join the Resistance, but I don't feel like doing that anymore.

My motive there wasn't exactly pure, was it? They all took it seriously enough to face death.

I bet this is all from the stress of fighting with that idiot Phillip a week ago. That idiot said he's quitting college and joining the German Army just because they've prepared an "honorary officer" position for him.

History proves he can't afford to go there. Phillip Missel uses his position as an honorary officer to act as a Resistance spy. And during the Resistance uprising on August 1, he takes part as a Knight Striker and dies. With that, the

Missel family, a former Chevalier de Paris family, is destroyed. Everyone in Paris recognizes that family's Signe de Épée, but it will die out once that happens.

But there was no way he would believe me if I told him that and he was sure to ask how exactly I knew. And so we've ended up fighting every time we see each other recently.

I can't believe it. As if today wasn't bad enough, the more people I get to know, the more stressed out I get.

I almost wish I hadn't done any research into this era. Instead, I made sure to learn about the people who died as part of the Resistance, the activity of famous people, and the conflicts that crop up here and there.

The railroad in Champagne is bombed tomorrow afternoon and the Normandy landings begin on June 6. Plus, Mallette gets caught in the Format and Phillip dies on August 1. On August 3, the German Army invades Bourgogne, angers a black dragon, and gets trampled along with an entire village.

From outside the closed-off city, France was swallowed by the Rondeau in August of '44, so the European battlefield had to avoid France. The Allies were forced to invade Germany from the south and north to finally drive Germany to surrender.

That was all in the past.

As long as my involvement today wasn't found out and everything around me is fine, I can return to my normal life tomorrow. I need to seriously focus on why I came to France.

I have two reasons for being here.

The first is pretty much the same reason I became a Knight Striker: The Attesor Project. That mysterious French Heavy Barrel development project was written of in a Death Techno compilation book sold before the war. I wanted to see if it actually existed. After all, some documents concerning it turned up in my great-grandfather's things back home.

My great-grandfather, Jack McWild, was originally an American technical officer and he had visited France as an adviser. That was when the Attesor

Project began.

My grandma had always been proud of him and I think it must have spread to me. The next thing I knew, I was a weird girl who was interested almost exclusively in Sein Fraus and Heavy Barrels. As my curiosity grew, I found myself dying to investigate the Attesor Project and to find out what my ancestor had done.

The other reason was my grandma.

Her parents, Jack McWild and Rose Francisca, had broken up for a few reasons. Jack McWild had taken my grandma with him when he moved to San Francisco where he built the Sein Frau maintenance factory where the family still lives, but in '39, his corpse was found floating in the Seine here in Paris.

And in '43, the Allies recruited my grandma for her skill as a Knight Striker and she infiltrated Paris as an exchange student. But while she was sent in to support the Resistance as a Knight Striker, I think she really went to investigate my great-grandfather's death.

In the end, she escaped to America just a few days before the Wort Bombe detonated. I'm sure a lot happened, but from what I've heard, the failure of the Paris Resistance's uprising on August 1 hit her pretty hard. Some people consider her a traitor and a deserter, but I don't mind.

I mean, it's thanks to that that she happened to miss the Format and became one of the First Erased. If not for that, my father and I would never have been born.

But my grandma did have one regret. She knew that Jack McWild and Rose Francisca broke up due to a misunderstanding between them and he apparently went back to Paris to make up with her.

After Jack McWild went to Paris, my grandma found a letter in the study of our home. It was addressed to Rose Francisca, but only with a name; there was no actual address given. He had likely thought she would understand once they found each other, decided not to mail it, and forgot about it without ever writing in the address.

I came to Paris with that letter.

The exchange students like me are supposed to investigate France and help create a backup before France fully closes itself off. In other words, the world is going to abandon France without liberating it.

However, it can't be liberated.

The world has reached the year 1998, but France is still connected to the years of 1943 and 1944. If France is liberated, it will be restored within 1944. My world of '98 has been a world without France ever since '44, so that restoration would create a 54 year paradox that would destroy the world of '98.

I don't have the guts to remake my "world without France" into a new "world with France".

I want to investigate the Heavy Barrel development project known as the Attesor Project and I want to get Jack McWild's letter to Rose Francisca to accomplish what my grandma failed to do.

My grandma has thought about this for a long time and that's why she named me Beretta.

Beretta is her name too and according to her:

"That way your great-grandmother will recognize you right away."

There's a lot I want to say about that, but she hasn't used her real name since leaving Paris and instead goes by Sword Lady, her Urban Name as a Knight Striker. She must have her reasons.

I need to give all of this more thought.

I've Signed what I need to do, so I guess I'll read my grandma's letter when I get back to my room.

There's so much I have to do.

But I am little worried about that Heavy Barrel and...yes, about those two in this mansion. They live in a mansion here, but there is no information at all about them in '98.

I wonder why. Well, I'll leave all the thinking for tomorrow.

Guilliaum's Journal

Today's Incidents:

1: Old Blue Eyes's Negotiations

Old Blue Eyes had his son and daughter-in-law taken to Germany as hostages and his grandson has been taken into the German Army as an honorary officer. To clear up any fears that he was colluding with the Germans, he escaped Paris on his own, negotiated with the national assembly members outside, and returned today.

He was negotiating for the sovereignty of the Free France faction of the Paris Resistance group I lead, to rid us of our obligation to work with the communist faction, and to give us the discretionary power to act freely.

It was a major negotiation, but he somehow managed it. We can now act at our own discretion when necessary while also awaiting instructions from the national assembly. That old man did well. It certainly helps to have the former Chevalier de Paris family as your second-in-command.

I think I will give him some time off starting tomorrow, but I'm worried that stubborn old man won't accept it.

2: Slaughter of Bluebeard's Team

Blue seems to be a popular color today.

Bluebeard's material acquisition and management team was slaughtered. The Allies must have messed something up because they certainly bungled smuggling in the female Lourd de Marionnette being sent in for support. According to Bluebeard:

"I found a Lourd de Écrivain girl with a nice anti-German spirit, so I'll have her check over the Lourd de Marionnette and try to bring her on as a Lourd de Écrivain when I see a chance."

But ironically, it was that Lourd de Écrivain girl who reported Bluebeard's death to me.

That said, the Lourd de Écrivain that Bluebeard found is definitely a good one.

But I will not recruit her. She's just that type of girl. She doesn't have the most important aspect of being a Lourd de Écrivain. She clearly enjoys performing the Recréa with a Lourd de Marionnette.

Yes, she's just like I was 25 years ago. And we can't have that.

Plus, that Lourd de Écrivain girl has far too many strange symbols to her.

3: The Prophecy

Everything that happened today was written of in a letter that Rose Francisca sent yesterday under a pseudonym for some reason. I thought it was all nonsense at first, but I was gradually forced to believe it. I ended up explaining my thoughts to Rosetta at dinner, but she did not seem to understand. That would be the normal response, though.

Who would believe that Paris is actually stuck in a loop?

Tomorrow, I will write letters for the families of Bluebeard and his team members. Only I can do this since Resistance members rarely if ever meet each other. I really shouldn't have let them make me their leader. All I end up doing is manage addresses, approve strategies, give orders, and look after the dead.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 10:00, my 72nd mechanization surgery was completed at Berlin's general hospital. Now the German Army's Panzer Ritter Project has advanced to the next stage.

At 12:44, I began healing from the surgery. I was freed from my restraints and allowed to wake up. At 17:07, my body's senses recovered.

At 19:21, my Grösse Panzer unit, the 1st Grösse Panzer Platoon of the 352nd Infantry Division, sent their 1st aide to inquire about the progress of my surgeries. After some quick questioning, he left.

At 20:00, I went for a quick walk inside the hospital. With the strengthened optical nerves provided by this surgery, I can now see through the darkness out the window. My body is now nearly 70% mechanical, so it is predicted I will have a reaction speed approximately 117 times faster than a normal person when combined with a Grösse Panzer. The mechanization of my body that began shortly after the previous Great War has successfully increased my reaction speed. I should probably celebrate that this surgery has allowed an old soldier of 58 to continue fighting, but the surgeries have erased my emotions and memories, so I have no memories of anyone to celebrate with.

Currently, something the 1st aide mentioned is sticking with me.

While our German Army has spent many long years experimenting on my body to create a true Panzer Ritter, France has long had its own project to create the strongest Panzer.

Theirs is named the Attesor Project. The Attesor Project's existence has long been rumored and, if I recall correctly, the German-born traitor and current adventurer named M. Schrier wrote about it in the 7th volume of his children's book series known as the Ober Geheimnis Compilation.

There are no known witnesses and very little material evidence, so it was

thought to be no more than childish rumors and guesses born in Bourgogne. But it seems that they have discovered there is more to it.

Our army is investigating the existence of that strongest Panzer development project. I feel no surprise or doubt about this. As a Panzer Kavalier, I simply leave it in the back of my mind as I go to sleep.

Chapter 2: Information



第二章

「報」

1944・02・22
～03・07

重騎をロゼッタが
毎日のように
磨いている——。

02/22/1944 – 03/07/1944

Rosetta polishes the Lourd de Marionnette every day.

2/22/1944

Journal de Paris: Morning Edition Front Page

A mystery Lourd de Marionnette appeared in the streets of Paris last night!!

Last night at around 8, a Lourd de Marionnette of unknown affiliation burst from a warehouse near the Théâtre du Châtelet and escaped the stationed German troops surrounding it. That Lourd de Marionnette has been missing ever since it vanished into the Boulogne Park. The investigative authorities are working with the stationed German troops to search the Seine on the western end of the park's forest and the lake inside the park.

There are some rumors claiming the Lourd de Marionnette crossed the river and escaped into the city to the north.

Letter from Sword Lady #7: To Beretta who Inherited my Name

Are you reading this, Beretta who inherited my name?

These letters developed by the US military are expensive, but I hope that means you really can take them with you into France. Well, they were made by people I've relied on a lot in the past and the 7th letter is hardly the time to start worrying.

Now, I told you to open one of these a month and this is the 7th one. That means it's February, Beretta.

By that time, you might just be finding yourself caught in – or causing – incidents I know nothing about. When I infiltrated the city as a special spy, I had a new Heavy Barrel sent in with me, but the Germans discovered it and blew it up, so I had to run for it. Disguising myself after that wasn't easy.

Now, the big incident in February would be the small Wort Bombe arriving in Paris. At 2:03 AM on the 14th, the Neue Bladlikburg IV lands at Paris's international airport (which I believe was half militarized at the time) and the bomb is transferred to a storage space below the airport.

During the Allies and Resistance's movement to liberate Paris on August 6, 1944, the frightened military commanders decided to drop the small Wort Bombe on central France using a transport plane. That destroyed France and started the endless repeating of history.

I'm guessing the lesson Germany learned in Russia wasn't when to give up; it was to use scorched earth tactics. In that case, they achieved the best results they could have hoped for. Think about it, Beretta. As long as France cannot escape the repeating age of the Rondeau, World War Two will never truly end. That was a fortunate result for Germany.

After all, the world has already given up on France.

The world will be destroyed if the 54-year paradox hits it. If that happened, you would live on in there, but those of us out here would be wiped out.

It's a tricky thing.

But can you see the world on the move outside that country? Outside that closed space, it's 1999, but from in there, everything outside France is still in 1944, isn't it? You're receiving information on the Allied and German activities outside the country, aren't you?

To perfect its own closure, France is attempting to recreate that year based on what information it has.

Everything you see outside France is only the "bare necessities".

France absorbed the memories of the people caught in the Format, so it knows who will contact someone outside the country and what response they'll get. So the information needed to respond is created based on their memory lives. It's pre-established harmony.

For example, think about the soldiers who landed at Normandy and were later caught in the Format. Until June of '44, they are placed in a world created based on their own memories and they live out their exact same life there in the Rondeau. Anything they didn't see isn't created. It's a world entirely based on their memories.

But what about someone like you who arrived from the outside world? If you try to contact someone outside the country, France will use all of the information it has to try and fool you.

So if you were to send a letter to that M. Schrier you look up to (He was in the US at the time, wasn't he?), since he briefly visited France in '39, France will use the memories of that time to build up his character and provide a response. (Of course, he was only in France for 3 days, so the answer will only be as accurate as those 3 days' of information allow.)

The problem is the Format concept.

You know I was there in '43 and '44, right? My personal reason was to search

out why your great-grandfather died and my official reason was to support the Resistance as a Knight Striker sent in by the US. I was publicly known as an exchange student, so my circumstances were a lot like yours now.

I was born in France, so I found it all so nostalgic when I arrived in '43.

But I escaped France just before August 6 and was not caught in the Format. France is repeating that year based on the worldview built up before August 6, 1943, but it does not contain my Lives or those of any of the other Erased.

France has its own memories of everything before August 6, 1943 and that includes us. But France does not remember the people who were not caught in that first Format.

Listen carefully, Beretta. The Paris I know is only the Paris I experienced. The Paris you learned about at school and read about in various documents is a second Paris that exists without me.

And the Paris you are in now is your Paris. You are borrowing my identity while there, but you are not my replacement. Keep that in mind.

Each year, Paris is a little different and then is Formatted again.

All of those are mistaken and false while also correct and true.

So don't worry about whether you've screwed everything up. I think I've given you everything I have other than my hair color, but I'm not going to take away your freedom. Everyone only gets one shot at reality. Once you're expelled by the Format on August 6, you can never enter France again. The immune system of France's own Lives will never again allow in anything "extra" once it's gotten in once. So focus on this one shot at being an exchange student.

If there is a right answer, it would be a way to liberate Paris from the Rondeau so it is never Formatted again. Of course, we don't even know if that's possible. You were taught all about this, weren't you? The immune system is gradually eliminating outsiders as it tries to immerse itself in that year of history undisturbed. And the scientists predict that, by 2005, France will fully reject the intrusion of anything from outside and become a truly closed city.

It really is a shy city, isn't it?

Beretta's Journal

I can't go on. Thanks to today's incident, I was subjected to a surprise inspection as a Knight Striker and my friends covered for me, but I can't go on. I'm so tired. The exhaustion hit me once I started reading my grandma's letter. It really hurts to know how much trouble I've caused: 1. I altered history in a bad way.

2. I was protected by others when a Knight Striker is supposed to be the one doing the protecting.

3. I don't have anyone I can discuss this with.

That's really all I need to know.

I'm going to sleep.

Guilliaum's Letter: Letter to a Far Distant Friend

My friend, I had just been thinking that I had nothing to tell you and had lost any opportunity to speak with you.

That would be because the Germans have occupied this city for 4 years now. Nothing new is happening and we were merely suppressed and monitored. Doesn't it all seem so silly?

But I am still writing you a letter because of something that has happened more in my private affairs than anything. And I am certain you will find it fascinating.

A Lourd de Marionnette showed up at my home. Since it is a long story, I won't explain how that came to be, but it was exactly what Rose Francisca said would happen. And it reminded me of what she had said:

"Paris is repeating its history over and over."

And only Rose Francisca knows the truth due to her skill as a Correcteur. According to her, France has been repeating this year for 54 years now and something will change this year.

Is this the beginning of that?

If so, what will it lead to? You don't know either, do you? If all this is true, how will the 54-year Rondeau come to an end? Even if the change this time is special, won't it all return to the way it was once we reach August 6?

To be honest, I don't really know the answer. And even if I did, there would be nothing I could do.

But still, what is this? Do young girls pilot Lourd de Marionnettes in this day and age? And with as much skill as I had in my heyday? The most frightening part is how she not only climbed the slope behind my house in the rain, but she also jumped right over the roof of my house. The Lourd de Marionnette is

collapsed in my courtyard. My house might only be 2 stories, but it's an old building that stands 12 yards tall. She jumped over that.

When I checked over her Lourd de Marionnette more carefully, I found the right leg's cylinders were completely shot. That girl brought herself this far with just one leg.

And when I checked the slope out back, there wasn't a single footprint. Even if the rain would have washed them out to an extent, she had to have been walking the right way. Not on her heels like the Germans do, but in the French style meant to move a Lourd de Marionnette around swiftly.

Ha ha. How about that? Do I have your interest now? It's been 25 years since I got this false right leg (or 79 years if Rose Francisca is to be believed. Viva long life), and I certainly never thought I would be directly involved with a Lourd de Marionnette again now. The Resistance inside Paris has 13 Lourd de Marionnettes, but none of them belong to the team I directly command and I did make that vow.

You know, the vow we made to never actively involve ourselves with Lourd de Marionnettes again.

But even after trying to distance myself from them, here I am.

How do I explain this? Maybe after reaching my mid-forties, my anger and resentment has calmed and my mind has grown as simple as a child's. A child who immediately reacts to everything in front of his eyes.

That girl might be the cause of that. But...to be blunt, I can't help but notice how much she resembles Rose Francisca.

To prove her theory, Rose Francisca predicted that a Lourd de Marionnette would arrive and then the girl who showed up looked somewhat like her.

Also, the girl said her name is Beretta.

Do you understand what that means? Rose Francisca's daughter is also named Beretta.

Is she that daughter? No, that daughter is supposed to be in San Francisco. And that daughter would probably remember me. Does she just so happen to

look like her? It just bothers me to no end.

I do intend to look into her identity. Nothing is making sense anymore. When Rose Francisca sent me a letter for the first time in 20 years, it was under a false name. What happened?

Rosetta also seems interested in that girl. Whenever she has some spare time lately, she polishes the milk-white Appareil in the basement storeroom. I don't know if she feels some kind of affinity as a Belle de Marionnette or if it's because of you-know-what. I'd probably have to ask you directly on that one. Why is Rosetta so interested in the Lourd de Marionnette?

And ever since last night, Rosetta has oddly begun to smile. I was shocked to see the smile on her face when she greeted me in the morning. I had never given her a life which made that necessary.

The Lourd de Marionnette was sent to the Resistance by the Allies, so it of course belongs to me. But the girl is a different story. I cannot bring her into the Resistance.

After I finished preparing the Lourd de Marionnette to be dismantled, I walked from the storeroom to the bath and happened to hear her crying in the guest room. She was apologizing to those who died that night. I have no intention of making a girl like that one of us. Well, maybe I've grown too soft. I will still look into her identity, though.

Until next time.

I expect something interesting will happen soon, so I will send you another letter then.

3/1/1944

**Sorbonne University Principal Mallory Bent's Letter: To Mr.
Guilliaum Balleroy**

Greetings, our beloved protector god.

The other day, you asked about the details of one of our students, so I have retrieved that information from our student affairs office and provided it below. I hope that it will be useful in guiding your future actions.

Name: Beretta McWild

Species: Human

Age: 21 (Born in 1923) Nationality: French (Lived in America for 15 years)

Family: Father (Jack McWild – Deceased)

Mother (Rose McWild – 48)

Appearance: Brown Hair, Blue Eyes Health: Excellent

Qualifications: Unrestricted Lourd de Marionnette License, Class 1 Official French Language Certification, Class 1 General Automobile License Academic

History: École Primaire de Paris – Graduated

San Francisco 3rd High School – Graduated

San Francisco State University – Accepted

After completing her first year, she transferred here (on a special invitation). The year after France was made German territory, she

reentered our school as a first year. She is currently a first year in our deuxième division.

Special Notes: She transferred from America, but she was originally French. She was born in Paris.

Her father was an American technical officer and her mother was the daughter of a doctor in the Bourgogne region. The details are unknown, but they were wed shortly after the war ended (1920) and she was born two years later (1923).

15 years ago (1929) she moved with her father to America due to a falling out between her parents.

5 years ago (1939), her father visited France for a business negotiation and died.

The San Francisco State University student affairs office is acting as her guardian.

She worked on Belle de Marionnette maintenance at her home and her industrial knowledge is impressive.

She also has great promise as a Chevalier and won the Lourd de Marionnette battle at the previous year-end festival.

If you wish to know any further details, please visit our student affairs office.

Berretta's Journal: Today's Entry #1

Today I'm writing this in the library like always.

My mood has improved enough that I actually feel like writing something for once.

I definitely didn't feel like wandering around outside for about 3 days after returning home from that commotion. The police showed up for a surprise inspection. They were apparently searching out all of the women in Paris with a Knight Striker license.

I was out that night, but my friends at the *appartements* got their story straight and saved me with a (false) alibi. But Mallette was really mad at me afterwards: "Why did you have to get back in the morning on that night of all nights?"

And yet she's always bringing guys home to her room. Still, she heard about the surprise inspections in the market that morning, so she's the one that saved me. I should buy her a tart on the way home today.

But I've learned that I really can use my grandma's identity here. She infiltrated France on July 25, 1943, and her falsified documents were sent to Sorbonne University. According to those documents, she arrived in Paris just before the war and then studied as a student there for 3 years.

She did a lot for the year after that, but she's disappeared for that year here. Because she wasn't caught in the Format.

So here I am living that life for her.

The normal "exchange students" have to falsify a lot more and pretend to either be German or French, so I have it a little easier. (Although the exchange student management office had to run around preparing a period-appropriate spy dismissal document to make sure none of my grandma's missions were sent

to me.)

The Format, hm?

During the First Format, France decided that everything inside it was its own property and now everything (life and death included) is reset every year. But the people who weren't in France during the First Format don't appear in the world after the Format. So there are some people who always "go missing" each year just after the Format. According to the statistics from '93, a total of 200,000 people escaped France between August of '43 and the First Format. The only reason so many people going missing only causes a small commotion is due to the German occupation.

People apparently get "purged" from time to time, so it isn't strange for a neighbor to just disappear.

The most unfair part is what happens to the people who died between August '43 and August '44. Their deaths became a part of the Format and they've died 54 times at this point.

Phillip Missel is one of those. He's from the former Chevalier de Paris family which bears the Signe de Épée and he lives a double life as both a part of the Resistance and an honorary officer in the German army. But during the Resistance uprising on August 1, he is killed by Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge's Barrel.

After spending some time with him I've realized that it's always the good people who end up dying like that.

Everyone looks at him with scorn because they see him joining the German army as a betrayal, but I'm sure he's gathering intelligence for France right now.

However, I can't tell anyone that and we ended up getting into a fight over that misunderstanding. We found out we had more than just school in common, like foods we like, and I even let him kiss me, but he has his reasons for this and I can't stop him.

But to be honest, I expect that's for the best. I dated him out of curiosity, but it's not anything more serious. Plus, he's going to die on August 1 this year. And even if he wasn't, I'll be sent back to my original age during the 54th Format on

the 6th and then I'll never be able to get back inside France.

I think it may be for the best to keep our relationship as it is.

Oh, but everyone's having a get-together today, so he might come to that.
Hmm, what should I do?

Let's change the subject. This is a journal meant to gather my thoughts, not a Sign document.

Now, then. I made the request before, so I'm allowed down to the 3rd level of the library basement. But I'm apparently terrible at Pointing. Just when I thought I'd found the book case I was looking for, I found out I tricked myself with my own Sign. I ended up asking the librarian lady for help.

There's something I have to look into.

But first, I think I'll do my usual ritual before studying: Pointing the preface to M. Schrier's bestselling children's book Death Techno Compilation Volume 7.

<Preface:

There is still plenty in this world that science and logic cannot explain.

Explorers like myself have heard rumors of and seen traces left by lost techniques all over the world. In some cases, they were announced to the world once their existence was confirmed and in some cases they were sealed away.

The previous volumes of this compilation provided information on what I have uncovered and heard concerning the Death Techno that existed during the Obstacle Era or before. Volume 7 will provide simple explanations of the Death Techno that are said to have come into existence only after this City Era began.

The first I will present to you is a rumor spoken of in France of a steel giant that appears in the Morvan Mountains of Bourgogne where a black dragon lives. Several times during the Great War, German troops went missing after advancing into this region. During that same period of time, the local residents claim to have seen a giant moving through the forest and mountains at incredible speed.

I thought this might just be a local superstition, but France once worked on a certain project: the Attesor Project meant to build the strongest Barrel.

That project name was whispered of during the Great War, but no facts rose to the surface even after the war ended and it is said that France was simply trying to preserve its reputation as a long-time builder of Heavy Barrels. But is that really true?

After the war, quite a few French military technicians and officers realized that they were missing a few years of their memories.

And there were indeed German troops who went missing in the Morvan Mountains. The mountain pass that avoided the black dragon's territory was the German army's only choice, but it was also a place of fear.

Were they attacked by the dragon who simply decided to go on a walk, or was it the mysterious giant?

I have gathered all such records. I hope you will read all of this and decide for yourself if the Attesor Project actually existed, if it ever produced the strongest Barrel, and why that research has left no results behind if it did. Now, please read on.>

This book was published in '41 and is the reason I came to France, so I always found myself reading through it. I wouldn't be who I am now if I hadn't happened across an old copy of this on the bookshelf at home when I was little.

The book doesn't prove the existence of the Attesor Project. It provides the details of the German troops that went missing while invading Morvan, it tells how the people of Bourgogne found large footprints and signs of sword fighting in the mountains, forest, and rivers, and it ends with a Marshal of France denying the existence of the Attesor Project.

But I know that the Attesor Project existed.

I don't know what it was or if it succeeded or failed. All I know is that almost everyone involved had their memories erased, that the research was done in Bourgogne, and that my great-grandfather Jack McWild led it as a technical officer sent in from America.

I came to France to investigate this. After all, the village of Herlde in the Bourgogne region was said to be located closest to the Attesor Project, but it was destroyed by a black dragon woken by the Germans stationed there on

August 3, 1944. It is said that there were no survivors.

Where was the research facility hidden in that land? There are a lot of contradictions and mysteries here.

Speaking of mysteries, there's one related to my grandma.

She gave me Jack McWild's letter. All it has is the name Rose Francisca, so I have no idea where to send it.

I can't seem to get permission to check through the records at the city hall, so it isn't easy.

But I'm sure my grandma had waited 53 years, until the brown hair she got from my great-grandfather grew gray, to give this letter to someone like me. I'm sure she has her reasons.

I wonder how everyone back home is doing. I wonder if the Sein Frau maintenance is going well without me around to help. I wonder if those sad, suicidal American Sein Fraus are doing well. Come to think of it, there was that Rosetta girl in that mansion. Am I a little curious about her because I'm feeling homesick? Or am I legitimately worried about her?

Even in this era, Sein Fraus in America are targets of discrimination and sadly end up killing themselves. I'd hate it if her circumstances were similar. Once the heat has died down, maybe I should go meet her and that Heavy Barrel. Oh, Point.

<The current time is 4:30 PM.>

This isn't sounding much like a journal entry anymore, so I should probably get going. I can stick these materials in my bag and stay up reading them in my room. I think I'll stop by the florist and buy some flowers. I can throw them into the Seine near that warehouse in memory of everyone who died.

There's no point in writing even more to gather my thoughts. I need to get going.

Letter Left by Mallette: To Beretta, My Neighbor who Got Home so Late

To my sworn friend Beretta.

You certainly got home late today. There might not be a blackout in effect, but past 8 at night is a time for the drunks and the *Allemande*. Then again, it is you, so if another drunk German officer approaches you on the street, you'll probably just kick him in the balls like last time. (That incident was how we ended up becoming friends, wasn't it?) But when it comes down to it, guys are stronger, so be careful. I know this from experience.

Yes, I had everyone gather for some drinking at the bistro down below, but Monsieur Phillip was very worried about you.

Do you know why he still comes to the bistro even after quitting college and putting on a German uniform? Do you know why he continues to show up even though all of his old friends see him as a German soldier and keep their distance? It's all for you. I can't know what someone else is thinking, but I bet his patience comes from his nature as a Lourd de Écrivain. Especially since he comes from the Chevalier de Paris family. You two need to hurry up and make up and then make out.

Or did you actually choose to eat out today because you knew he would be coming? You need to put an end to that kind of stubbornness. I'm sure he has his reasons. (And I'm his only ally at the moment, so I'd like to have someone else as soon as possible.)



I'll answer roll for you in class tomorrow morning, so you can sleep in. I know there's no waking you up the following morning when you were up past 10. Unlike the French Lourd de Écrivain, are all American Knight Strikers so carefree? And as always, my fee for answering roll for you is doing my laundry.

So see you tomorrow.

Your sworn friend Mallette.

Letter Left by Phillip: To Beretta

Today I bought what you had asked for back before I joined the German army and I was waiting in front of the university and the bistro all day. Since I was off duty. So what do you want to do about that? Do you not need the detailed map of France's central Bourgogne region I bought for you? If not, I'll cook it and eat it.

And listen carefully. No, read carefully, Beretta. Do you intend to take part in the Lourd de Marionnette battle at this year's school festival? The German army's Paris branch apparently intends to send in a Lourd de Écrivain as a special participant, but they're kind of pissed after you put them to shame at last year's year-end festival. I would recommend not taking part. That is all.

From a poor noble who is a former Écrivain in name only

Berretta's Journal: Today's Entry #2

Dammit, they just say whatever they want, don't they? I'm worried about so much in secret, but being an exchange student is stressful enough on its own.

Oh, but if Phillip was here, I should have gotten back earlier. According to history, he'll start his serious spying in the German Army soon and he'll start diverting materiel to the Resistance. Once that happens, he'll be too busy to even think about me.

Yes, but that should be for the best. Surely.

He'll be busy with that, he'll work toward the liberation of France, and he'll die in the Resistance uprising on August 1. And 5 days later on the 6th, the Allies and the local Resistance will join together, flood into Paris, and lead the frightened Germans to detonate the Wort Bombe above France. That will trigger the Format.

He was unlucky, so he died before the Format. And since history is repeating itself, he's already died 54 times. This will be his 55th time.

This is a pretty well-known tragedy in the outside world. I never thought I would briefly get to date someone so famous. It started when I borrowed his notes from class, then we started discussing Heavy Barrels and other things, and it was only after we were walking side by side that I learned who he was.

From then, I started keeping my distance, he joined the German army just as history said he would, and 2 months have passed.

We never actually broke up, but if he'll stop worrying about me and will return to the normal course of history, that has to be for the best.

Not that it makes me happy.

Ahh, now I'm feeling down. It's always like this with Phillip recently. And I'm pretty sure there's something else I should be writing about. Hmm, I guess I'll

get to sleep.

3/6/1944

**German Army Paris Branch Telegram: To the German Army
Military Police**

At 11 AM today, the search for the unidentified Grösse Panzer that caused Battle #431021-18P will be ended. But we will continue searching for information, so have your inspectors do their best to focus on any actions taken by the Anti-German Resistance working secretly in Paris and the surrounding region recently. Over.

Secret Document from the Resistance National Assembly within the Allied Forces: To the Paris Region Resistance Leader

As approved by a majority vote in the national assembly, you have been given emergency discretionary power. As such, we ask that you respond quickly and responsibly to any issues that might arise. This decision will be introduced in the national assembly military law white paper to be published on March 10 of this year. Based on the French Government-In-Exile Military Law Book to be published on the same day, this will go in effect on April 1.

We have high hopes for your future actions.

From the Prime Minister of the French Government-
In-Exile

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 09:02 I was discharged from Berlin's general hospital.

I submitted my request for post-surgery return to service at the army general headquarters. They said I should receive approval and orders in a week's time. The higher ups believe the Panzer Ritter Project is advancing well.

I also stopped by the intelligence division and asked about rumors of the Attesor Project, but the personnel there said they did not know. I believe it is either disinformation or information only available to the higher ups.

At 16:20, I entered the barracks.

At 18:11, the 1st aide visited and asked a few questions. My platoon is stationed near Normandy and it seems the Allies have been making diversions near Calais. He left at 18:57.

At 20:05, I organized my luggage in the barracks. I found a photograph among them.

The photograph depicted a woman and a girl smiling in front of some flowers.

I believe they must be dependents of mine, but I have no memories of them due to losing my emotions and memories in the surgeries. I returned the photograph to the bottom of my luggage.

I cannot determine what the photograph means. And as I think back on my actions today, I am unsure as to why I visited the intelligence division to inquire about the Attesor Project.

Perhaps as a reaction to the emotion-erasing surgery, something that has remained in the back of my mind may be leading to actions taken out of simple curiosity. This could reduce my decision-making ability, so I plan to ask the researchers about it soon.

I will now go to sleep.

Guilliaum's Journal

Today's Incidents:

1: Conclusion of the Incident on the 21st

The German army has ended their public search for the female Lourd de Écrivain. The Resistance has no female Lourd de Écrivains, so that search will turn up nothing. Apparently only 6 female Lourd de Écrivains live in Paris.

And one of those apparently has political connections, so the emergency search was called off.

2: The German Army's Panzer Ritter Project has Advanced a Step

That Heinz Berge apparently has thoughts and reflexes 117 times faster than a normal Lourd de Écrivain.

He's no longer human. Only *that* might be able to defeat him.

3: Rosetta's Changes

Rosetta polishes the dismantled Lourd de Marionnette in the basement storeroom every day.

She sometimes brings that girl up in conversation. Did she sense something in that contact with a stranger?

4: The Discretionary Power Decision

I finally have what I was hoping for. This means we can act as soon as something happens. Before, we always had to keep an eye on how the communist Resistance was reacting, but now we can make immediate decisions.

5: The Girl's Identity

I don't understand this. Based on her history and name, she is Beretta McWild. She is Rose Francisca and Jack McWild's daughter. To think I would

have another chance to see the name of that man who showed up 30 years ago, messed with all of our destinies, and made a lone woman cry.

I see. It is true that girl looks a lot like Rose Francisca back when we were still normal.

But it's strange. When I met that girl 15 years ago, I'm fairly certain she had brown hair. And the document and ID photo I received from Mallory also show brown hair.

But the girl calling herself Beretta that night was blonde. So she must be someone else. As further proof, she should remember me and my mansion, but when I spoke with her, she was not very familiar with Paris's land. Based on her demeanor and softness, she doesn't seem to be substitute spy sent in by the Allies. Is there more to her or not? I am waiting for a response to my letter to Rose Francisca who prophesied that girl's arrival.

But it is all so strange. A girl who looks so much like Rose Francisca pilots one of those Lourd de Marionnettes that Jack McWild loved so much and she is influencing a Belle de Marionnette's heart. It must be a sign.

That is all for today. I am gradually solidifying my position here.

And now I have more weighing on my mind. I should be busy from now on.

3/7/1944

**The Prophetess's Letter: To Monsieur Guillaum, the Former
Royal Guard Chevalier**

It is good to speak with you again. I apologize for using a fake name once again. This is Rose Francisca.

I am pleased to hear you understood the prophecy I sent to you the other day.

I have a lot of free time while running a clinic in a mountain village, so I have nothing to kill the time but to increase my power as a Correcteur according to the Eastern tradition.

To be precise, I noticed the change to France 25 years ago. (Or should I say 24 loops ago?) I was introduced to the concept of the Primitif by an adventurer who visited this region (he apparently arrived from the outside world), and I discovered a way to preserve my memory Formules before I died that year.

I took my own life before the Primitif and permeated the Formules of my own death with my memories. When the Primitif transferred me from death to life, the memories permeating the Formules were not expelled as extraneous and were returned as a part of Rose Francisca.

By continuing to investigate this world on my own like that, I have learned a number of things. I know that this world has repeated this year 54 times, I know what will happen, and I know everything.

But during this investigation, two thoughts occurred to me.

First, I began to wonder if these prophecies were meaningless.

Few people will believe me and, even if I do change the future, it will all be reset when August 6 rolls around. I have recently started to wonder if it would be best to leave everything to its natural course.

Second, I began to wonder if these prophecies have meaning even so.

After training for 25 years, I am beginning to gain a slight grasp of manipulating the Formules of time itself. In addition to the events that occur every year, I can now somewhat prophecy events that are unique to this year.

France is closed off by the Primitif Rondeau.

This is a frightening thing because it means France cannot evolve in this world.

To liberate closed France, two powers are needed in addition to my prophecies. Since you know France better than anyone, I think I will share them with you.

But I want you to keep in mind that these two powers will need your assistance.

One of those powers is already in motion. A girl with the same name as my daughter should have visited you. Please ask her nothing of me, tell her nothing of me, and simply go along with whatever she wants. She has arrived from outside and I think she is a relative of mine.

She is also standing at a major crossroads. People like us should not throw a new problem at her now. If she heard my name, she might grow dependent on it.

Even if my prophecies are necessary, I will not use them just to make things more convenient. I have a hunch that she and I will eventually meet. That is the proper course of things.

Please say nothing of me.

Yes, just like you and he never told me a word about the Attesor Project. Until you told me about it in '40 when he died, you spent more than 20 years without telling me. Why do men grow so stubborn when they decide to be villains?

If possible, I wish his death could have been delayed by 4 years. Then his

death would have been rewound and repeated by the Primitif and I might have been able to meet him again in life.

But I'm just complaining now. Pay it no mind.

I hope that you will be interested in my prophecies, that you will truly understand what it means to liberate this world, and that you will continue to feign ignorance around that girl who has most likely arrived from outside.

There is much I must inform you of: why France has grown so shy that it repeats the same year over and over, why I am refusing to meet you or anyone else from my past, why I used a false name on the envelope when writing you a letter for the first time in 20 years, and so much more. If you have any questions concerning my prophecies or that girl, please write me a letter addressed to the Prophetess.

Chapter 3: City



第三章

「街」

1944・03・11
～03・16

旦那様は
その赤でもって
羊皮紙に字を
書き連ねました——

03/11/1944 – 03/16/1944

The master used that red to write on the parchment.

March 11, 1944

Rosetta's Journal: Today's Entry #1

I have a lot to write today so I decided to go ahead and write about what just happened while Lady Beretta has gone to her university. When I made an Ajouter to check on the number of plates while cleaning up after breakfast I heard the bell ring at the front door. I made another Ajouter assuming it was the food delivery but I found Lady Beretta standing there. She had a two wheeled machine known as a *bicyclette* next to her and she greeted me cheerfully so I have determined she is not a bad person. I asked her why she was there.

She said she had wondered how we had been doing and so stopped by on the way to university. She held a large bag in her hand and I immediately let her inside and called for the master. He responded after I pulled on the string for the bell at the bottom of the stairs three times. He had probably been asleep because he had been up late the previous night writing those letters he never sends. Until I could write my journal entries in the first floor study he had written letters there which he only put in the cabinet. But once I became fully conscious I think he moved to the second floor to write them. Lately he has also been writing letters he does send out because he will sometimes leave the house with a sealed envelope. I do not know which he was writing last night because I am not allowed on the second floor. I got sidetracked.

The master looked like he wanted to say something when he met Lady Beretta but then he cleared his throat. He was acting weird but the weirdness ended there.

After the two of them exchanged a few words they went to the basement.

storeroom to see the large machine with limbs much like mine I finished washing all the plates and was making the occasional Ajouter when Lady Beretta called for me I expect this will be hard to describe so I will simply write out what was said Rosetta this mansion is too large and I am lost so if you can hear me can you tell me where I am Our extended vowel sounds as we yelled to each other would probably be better represented by misspelling the words with repeated vowels so I will do that from now on Please Signe your surroundiiiings

There is a weird deer head growing from the wall and it looks like a hallwaaaay It sounds like you are in front of the first floor study so I will be there right awaaaay No waaaait If you are coming bring a sharp knife with yooooou

I selected the easiest to use knife in the kitchen and went to rescue Lady Beretta My Signe had her standing in front of the first floor study but my Ajouter showed her sitting as she waited for me As soon as I arrived she grabbed my hand and took me to the basement storeroom while saying they were going to make a contract in blood The master was waiting for us in the basement storeroom below the courtyard and he had a piece of parchment spread out on a work bench He took the knife from me and quickly cut his own index finger

The red substance I had seen on that February night flowed from his finger and the master used that red to write on the parchment After writing some sloppy circles and letters he passed the knife to Lady Beretta who also cut her finger and wrote on the parchment They exchanged some words in a language I do not know and then the master ordered me to place the parchment on my right hand I did so



After about five seconds Lady Beretta mentioned that nothing was happening
The master told me to change to another false arm

I was wearing the waterproof brass one but he told me to use the more human one made of ceramic I did not know what purpose that held because the brass one seemed to work best with my body and the ceramic one seemed to work the worst Nevertheless I did not question his order so I pulled it out of the first floor storeroom Lady Beretta seemed to have followed me and she walked into the storeroom I had just removed my top and was undoing the bolting for my shoulder so we had the following exchange I am changing but do you need something

Sorry That old man did not explain properly but we need a third party for that contract ceremony and it will only work if your false arm is modeled after a human one Sorry again Why are you apologizing

I disliked not telling you what this was about and treating you like a machine
But I am a machine

Yes yes All Belle de Marionnettes say that at first How old are you

It has been 35 years since I was made and 15 years since I become conscious
That means you have lived that long and yet have only become this human Rosetta After she said that Lady Beretta touched my body

My head and most of my torso had become identical to a human through the Coppelia Effect and I felt her fingers stroking my belly as she said the following
You are just like the Belle de Marionnettes I knew in America When you are made to serve as maids your sight hearing and speech are the first things you gain through the Coppelia Effect The sense of taste comes next and that means you have the same internal organ system as a human which give you a metabolism What does that mean

No matter what you might think you are alive Rosetta You are not a machine Lady Beretta smiled after that but I had no idea what she was talking about and wondered why someone I barely knew would be determining my characteristics as a Belle de Marionnette I also wondered why she was giving me that smile that was far from unpleasant I am a machine

Even if I can become closer to human through the Coppelia Effect I cannot

become fully human Some part of my body will probably wear out before then and I will break I can become closer to human through the Coppelia Effect but I do not understand why I must become human All I need to do to live with the master is to cook food and to clean and write my journal entries and to sleep I do not need any functions beyond those four

Lady Beretta waited for me to finish attaching my arm and then we returned to the storeroom together In the storeroom I placed the parchment on my hand and said what the master told me to say I swore not to let anyone else know this secret

When I said that the dried dark red substance burned a mark into the parchment I had never seen anything like it before

Then Lady Beretta took the parchment and had the following exchange with the master Now we can both deal with this Lourd de Marionnette without any reservations If you break your promise I will take all of your luck Got that So that means I can research this Lourd de Marionnette until you have sucked all my luck away You accepted this pretty easily old man Who are you

I must keep that a secret due to a promise I made with a woman who once rejected me Well there is no helping that then

Do not act so understanding Oh and you can put your other arm back on now Rosetta No do not Old man you cannot have her do that You need to work harder to have her evolve into a human Or are you a metalphile Do not be silly And I am free to do what I want with my own Belle de Marionnette Is that so Then take a look at Rosetta

Lady Beretta and the master looked at me but I had no idea why she had said that As I stood there she continued the conversation

Rosetta is no longer your doll old man You told her to put her other arm back on but she has not The master grumbled and I realized I had obeyed Lady Beretta when she told me to stop instead of obeying the master I still do not know why that is

But Lady Beretta slapped my shoulder and spoke with a smile

That is how it should be Rosetta Your father would have wanted it this way

but you have just forgotten that How can you be so sure

Maybe it is the blood flowing in my veins The blood of a Lourd de Écrivain and a Belle de Marionnette technician Her smile changed when she said that

It was an odd smile that had all the elements of a smile but did not feel like one She then completely ignored the master to speak to me some more

Quit sitting around here and head out with me Rosetta This metalphile old man is obsessed with the Lourd de Marionnette so you can leave him be for a while Why did you even come to my mansion

What does it matter I have made sure the Lourd de Marionnette is safe and fulfilled my responsibility to the others so now I just have to socialize with the person I met here Personally I cannot believe you will not let such a cute girl out into the city of Paris Some of what had happened caught in my heart

Namely the father that Lady Beretta had mentioned and the fact that I had obeyed her instruction to stop over the command from the master I have heard my father died before I gained consciousness

A warm sensation remains in my memories but I do not know if my father wanted me to become human No one has ever told me to become human and I have never wished to become human I am a machine

So why am I sitting here waiting for Lady Beretta to return from her university This is not the feeling of waiting for a guest I must serve as part of my *ménage* duties It feels more like waiting to see what kind of ingredients the food delivery person brings by I do not understand

The only things I do understand are that Lady Beretta knows a lot that I do not and that I understand her even less than I understand myself That is likely because she exists outside of what I understand but I have not been told to reject things just because I do not understand them so I will not reject her even if I do not understand her So I am now waiting for her to return from her university

Continually making Ajouter while I wait is one of my jobs

Sorbonne University Student Message Board:

Canceled Class Announcement for 3rd Years

Professor Hermes Becarre who has been teaching Class 3-D1, Modern History, will be resigning on March 10 for personal reasons.

A replacement instructor is planned to arrive on March 25.

Class 3-D1 will be canceled until then, so the students are to use that time for self study.

Letter Left by Beretta: To Mallette, My Neighbor Who Doesn't Know About Our Canceled Class

Hi there, Mallette.

You seem to still be asleep, so I'll shove this into your room's *boîte aux lettres*.

I just rode on over to school on my bike and found class was canceled. Modern History won't be back until March 25.

The reason why is pretty cool: the professor is retiring due to personal reasons. But we all knew how readily Old Man Becarre would complain about the German army during his lectures.

I'm gonna change the subject.

Oh, yeah. Since I didn't have to answer roll for you, I'll make sure to Signe that I returned the payment of lunch money along with this letter.

But, Mallette, you really shouldn't bring so many guys back with you. I'm your direct neighbor and that's fine, but the landlord is on the other side of me. You need to keep your voice down. And the girl across from you is single, so she probably doesn't like it much either. You need to get along with your neighbors.

Oh, and I don't need lunch or dinner today, so say hi to everyone for me. (If that idiot Phillip shows up and tries to say something, stomp on his foot for me.) I have some business to take care of. Tell everyone that and tell them I'm helping people and not with a guy like you would be. I'll be at the library like normal.

Okay, we can chat tonight (assuming you don't have a guy in your room).

Beretta's Journal: Today's Entry #1

Now, then. I've come to the library like always, but things are a little different this time.

Professor Hermes was purged a week earlier than he was the other years. This world really is solidly made, so it all flows. Knowing too much about how things go can be a problem in its own way.

I Pointed two men who were fighting on the road on the way here, but what they were fighting over scared me.

One of them was an old baker and the other was an elderly man even older than the baker. But that elderly man was telling the baker to stay away from his bakery tomorrow. Here's what he said as to why:

"I know you'll be killed by a robber tomorrow!!"

According to someone who lives in the area, that baker's only son was taken in by an relative's family who lives out of the country in June of last year.

That son must have spent 53 years outside of France looking into what happened to his parents. And now he was here as an exchange student and trying to stop his parents from being killed.

At the time, entering Paris had been impossible, so as a child, he must not have been able to do anything even when he had heard about his parents' deaths.

To him, this was truly a once-in-a-lifetime chance.

There are people like this. But I doubt he'll get through to his father. That baker would never believe him if this man older than him claims to be his son who should be in another country. Plus, that baker will be brought back to life and killed every year. It's all meaningless.

But there is something weighing on my mind.

The Resistance members who died because I piloted that Heavy Barrel and Phillip who will die before long are both weighing on my mind. Just as my grandma said, this is real to me even if it will be redone.

So I want to treat this all with care.

I was reminded of that fact when I saw Rosetta today. The people around me will be lost, but I can give some things to Rosetta. Because I was born into a Sein Frau technician family.

Is that only an excuse for what will be lost? Am I a hypocrite? I don't really care. I know I'm worried about Rosetta and that's what matters.

Does she want to become human?

Even in this age, the discrimination against Sein Fraus is really bad in America. It isn't much different from the age I lived in. My grandma must have known that. The American Sein Fraus simply shed tears, cannot become human, and commit suicide. The European Sein Fraus aren't that bad. But Rosetta's treatment is awful in a different way. If possible, I want her to think more about a great many things and to become someone I can discuss my ideas with. But if she doesn't want to become human, then it's meaningless.

Especially because becoming human means a lot of worry and pain.

I think that is what a Sein Frau should be, but I can't force it onto her. Because Rosetta doesn't belong to me. I need to keep that in mind so I don't get carried away.

Now for a Point.

<The current time is 11:02 AM. A scattering of people are inside the large library.

It is the ideal environment for reading a book.>

I see. Then I'll stop by the old man's mansion at 2. It's the Balleroy Mansion, right? I promised Rosetta I would discuss some things with her this afternoon, so I have to stop by. But when I start reading, I can get lost in my own world and forget to Point the time, so I need to be careful. I'll jot down a note.

- **Make sure to check the time frequently.**

Now, time to greet the usual librarian.

<According to the librarian, there is a way to send letters out of the country while avoiding the usual inspection. She told me that was just between the two of us, but it seems she has a route to smuggle letters out of the country.>

My guess is it's a Resistance route. I have some questions for M. Schrier who wrote the Death Techno Compilation, so it might be worth sending them to the publisher. M. Schrier was in America at this time, but my grandma's letter had said this:

<So if you were to send a letter to that M. Schrier you look up to (He was in the US at the time, wasn't he?), since he briefly visited France in '39, France will use the memories of that time to build up his character and provide a response. And if you ask a question related to France, you should receive a response of considerable accuracy.>

If I sent him a letter about the Attesor Project, France would send me back as accurate a letter as it could. If that works, I might get quite a bit of information that way. France doesn't know how important the information is. It only wants to prove that there are no holes in the world it created so that it can truly close itself up. Could I take advantage of that and trick France into giving me the information?

But I guess I'll do everything I can on my own before doing that.

When I compared the previous data with the results of my previous investigations, a lot clicked into place.

The Attesor Project was something that really did exist during the previous World War and it was meant to develop the strongest Barrel. The project was said to have been carried out in the Morvan Mountains. The German army went missing when they invaded there and there are records of the local people hearing sounds of sword fighting in the mountains late at night.

But after the war, the military denied all of the rumors and no evidence remained. And most of the German army's damage reports were discarded in the Treaty of Versailles, so they can't be used to prove anything.

And on August 1, 1944, a black dragon attack destroys the nearby village of

Herlde and a portion of that mountainous region, so entering the Morvan area was deemed dangerous and a detailed investigation became impossible. Now is the only time to investigate the Attesor Project.

Ironically enough, the Attesor Project is considered no more than a silly rumor due to the influence of M. Schrier's book. People view it just like Atlantis and the Lost World, so it's only used in some fun children's books. That's the usual pattern, isn't it? People go missing, civilians find traces of something going on but never see the actual thing, and then the military denies it all.

The Attesor Project follows that pattern, but it isn't a lie.

Today I learned that the French army has a few hidden units. The most famous is the 0th Heavy Barrel Brigade that moves from battlefield to battlefield as a commando unit, but that isn't all.

I learned there was also a private unit led by an officer who was former nobility. I have the details in my notes, but the odds are good that something weird like the Attesor Project would be led by an eccentric officer.

If so, I need to visit the city hall and ask if I can view the tax ledgers from that time. I doubt I'll get permission with the German army in control, though.

Then again, I'm probably the only one investigating this old military project right now.

Even if it existed and had had successful experiments, that project was from 25 years ago even counting from Paris's current time period. Plus, it was a project that was discarded and abandoned by the military.

In this age, the Germans are working on what they called the Panzer Ritter Project. Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge, a hero from the First World War, had his entire body swapped out for prosthetics adapted for a Heavy Barrel to give him reactions speeds 117 times greater than the average Knight Striker.

To be honest, not even an optimistic like me thinks some old tech is going to outdo that German tech. They probably had some decent tech with some decent results, but their research has probably been blown way out of proportion by the rumors and the project was probably never all that credible to begin with.

But if that's all true, why was Jack McWild so intent on keeping anyone else from getting involved that he said nothing when his wife left him, said nothing to my grandma, and went to France where he was killed?

The story is that he got drunk and fell into the Seine, but everyone in our family is a pretty heavy drinker.

My grandma's research found there was apparently a knife wound in the tibia of his remains. 1939 was when the war began and France was terrified, so it wouldn't surprise me if what actually happened was covered up.

I think I'll look into some things and visit Bourgogne eventually. Before August 1.

At the moment, I have to wonder: Why was Jack McWild trying to build the strongest Heavy Barrel?

It has long been said that Knight Strikers exist to protect people, but I lost my companions as a Knight Striker.

Was that what I got for being a Knight Striker just for fun, or was it because I'm not strong enough as a Knight Striker? That's a bit of a question for me.

I have a lot of questions. I don't know where Rose Francisca is right now. She isn't in Paris. I know she and Jack McWild had their wedding in Paris, but where did they meet?

I bet she's returned to her hometown, but where is that? I want to check through the city hall's records.

And there is another mystery: Why does my knowledge from the 90s include nothing about the Balleroy family? I looked it up here and found they were the former Royal Guard Chevalier family that led the regional Chevaliers and their mansion is in a noticeable spot, but that information was entirely missing from what I was taught before arriving.

Was someone trying to hide the mansion's existence? Or was there nothing there in this age? I just don't know.

But that's fine. That at least means I wasn't taught that Rosetta or the old man die, so I don't have to worry about them. Oh, Point.

<The current time is 2:01 PM.>

I guess I'll get going. None of this has been very journal-like and I need to talk with Rosetta this afternoon. Maybe I've been worrying about too much recently. I'll put my notes in my bag and leave.

Guilliaum's Letter: To a Far Distant Friend

My friend,

There has been little to report recently, so I had thought I would not have a chance to speak with you.

But, well, now two or three things connected to you have happened in a row, so I felt the need to make a report.

That girl showed up today. At the moment, she has taken Rosetta out into the yard where they are eating snacks.

I put so many restrictions on her concerning Rose Francisca: do not ask about our identities, do not speak about us, and do not write any letters using our real names. And yet she readily asked about my Royal Guard Chevalier family and about Rosetta. I managed to avoid answering, but I'm really not sure what to do. I especially panicked when she asked about the Attesor Project. I hesitated a moment before laughing it off. I just hope she didn't suspect anything.

But this makes it even harder to invite her to the Resistance. If what Rose Francisca has said is accurate, it does not seem there is anything I can do about this girl for the time being.

And when I look at it like that, well, she seems like nothing more than a troublemaker girl with too much energy, which is kind of funny. I'm probably just projecting our past onto her, but I really don't think we were ever that much of a nuisance.

She bluntly told me it was my fault that Rosetta isn't evolving. That kid really needs to learn some manners. Still, I do understand why she is so fixated on Rosetta's evolution. Belle de Marionnettes are discriminated against in America, so they're treated as the lowest class.

The mass-produced Belle de Marionnettes in America are mostly treated like

toys or slaves, so it is a miracle when they manage to evolve into a human even a little bit. That might have something to do with it, but this is what she said to me: "If Rosetta wants to remain a machine, that's fine, but you can't just let her stay like this without telling her she can become human. You have to let her know that is a possibility."

It shows how young she is.

But when I look out there, I see Rosetta following that girl around without knowing what any of it means.

What that girl is trying to do to Rosetta is certainly different from me. Taking her outside will expand her possibilities in many more directions than staying inside the mansion.

If I didn't have this prosthetic right leg...if my leg wound's Formule had not settled in place while I was in the POW camp, I might have made Rosetta my secretary while I commanded the Resistance.

But the past is the past. I'm really not sure what to do. I'm being tossed around by that girl a fair bit too. Does she really intend to have Rosetta evolve? If so, what do I do? Personally, I kind of feel like leaving this up to destiny. I have lived for so long with a policy of not letting Rosetta evolve, but she started smiling just from meeting that girl.

Rosetta might like that girl more than us.

If so, that girl might be able to correct the many mistakes behind Rosetta's birth. I'm really, really not sure what to do. Maybe I'm too old for all this.

Maybe this is due to the fear I felt when I saw the changes in tech in this cutting-edge Lourd de Marionnette. I was especially shocked by the high-quality ultra-high-speed conversion Cabinet that is entered through the secondary seat. That would probably let you Recréa in less than 2 minutes after boarding it. The world really is changing. In our day, you would follow all the proper etiquette in battle unless it was an unexpected engagement, but now that tanks and airplanes are becoming the main fighting force, Lourd de Marionnettes are apparently being used more as high-speed strike forces.

If this age has been repeating itself as Rose Francisca claims, then the real

outside world is filled with tech 55 years more advanced than this. It makes me want to cry.

Rumor has it that Old Man Heinz who took my right leg is now a lieutenant colonel in the German army, but he's apparently taking part in the Panzer Ritter Project. I met him during an unexpected engagement, but his family was known as the Kaiser's right arm and he preferred proper one-on-one battles to an unexpected engagement.

I still sometimes dream about fighting him in accordance with all the etiquette. It always ends with me winning, though. Although in reality I lost and was taken prisoner until the end of the war. I thought I would retire after that, but then I ended up as the Resistance leader just as this war was beginning. I shoved a little too much of the work off onto Old "Blue-Eyes" Jan, though. Maybe that's because the Balleroy family led the Missel family as the Royal Guard Chevalier.

But that position went away in the people's revolution and the remaining Chevalier de Paris lost its role during the previous war.

The old traditions are lost, but the people who were around back then don't want to forget how we used to fight.

Then again, Old Man Heinz is seeing how close man can come to machine in the Panzer Ritter Project. He has apparently increased his reaction speed inside a Lourd de Marionnette more than 100-fold, but he might not be human any longer.

I'm betting he's Germany's strongest weapon at this point. I mean, he was already quite the *chevalier de chevalier*.

Once again, I'm really not sure what to do. This basically means the German army is doing the same thing as a certain project I could mention. A toast to human folly and to Heinz's health.

And I'll end this on a more depressing topic. Becarre, who I used to go drinking with to discuss this country, was arrested. I bet it had something to do with being Calamity's brother, but Old Blue-Eyes said he turned himself in. There were apparently some dangerous rumors and his entire family was being investigated, so he turned himself in. Old Blue-Eyes's grandson apparently

wrote up the records and directly reported it to his higher ups.

I'd really like to meet that grandson at some point. I'm betting he didn't become an honorary officer in the German army for self-preservation. I'm betting his grandfather set it up so they could handle things like this.

I think I'll ask his grandfather about it at tomorrow's gathering. That old man is quite the actor, after all.

Until we speak again.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 09:30, I had a meeting with the Panzer Ritter Project Research Team at Berlin's general hospital. I pointed out that I was growing interested in information about the Attesor Project and that it could distract me and disturb my decision-making.

But the research team said my memory activity had been reduced to the bare minimum required for everyday life plus memories of my military duty and past battles. They said all of my actions are based in that.

That means I will not do anything beyond my everyday activities that is not related to combat. All knowledge and memories I desire are based on combat. That was what I desired when I joined the Panzer Ritter Project.

In that case, my pursuit of the Attesor Project is not based in emotion; it is necessary to strengthen myself.

According to one researcher, "Your memories might include a battle that is making you think of the Attesor Project."

I have decided to focus my research on discovering which of my few remaining memories that is. So I will use all time not spent in battle investigating the Attesor Project. I have decided I must rid myself of this curiosity before I return to the battlefield.

At 17:04, I left Berlin's general hospital. I searched for M. Schrier's Ober Geheimnis Compilation at a bookstore, but it has been banned within Germany and is thus impossible to acquire.

At 18:21, I returned to the barracks. Nothing more to report.

Letter Left by Mallette: To Beretta, My Neighbor who is Staying Out so Late

To my sworn friend Beretta,

Let me make one thing very clear up front: I have not been bringing any guys home lately.

Please refrain from making such flagrant false accusations in the future. The noise at night has nothing to do with guys; I am practicing the *violon* I need for my major!! How could you possibly mistake that beautiful music for something like that? I'll admit I'm pretty inexperienced, but...oh, curse him.

That guy said I played "such wonderfully emotional music", but when I played the exact same way in class this afternoon the professor called it "horrific" and gave me a G.

But let me get to the point of this letter, Beretta.

Last night, Mr. Phillip asked me for some advice. Advice about you. That's all I'm saying. I won't tell you anything more. Think for yourself about how important that is. And he gave me a map, so come pick it up. Bye.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's Entry #2

A lot of important things happened today but I cannot write about most of them in this journal Lady Beretta ordered me to write them in a letter and send them to her So I will only write about what I saw out in the yard this afternoon What happened at dinner I will write about in a letter

At around four Lady Beretta and I were sitting on a sheet and looking down at the city of Paris from the hill I always mow the grass between spring and summer in that yard but I had never just looked down at the city before As I did there was always some small change occurring in the city Whenever I noticed one and asked about it Lady Beretta would politely tell me what it was The small lights I occasionally saw were the light reflected off of the windows being opened or closed The smoke coming from low areas were a sign of someone cooking at a bistro or restaurant The smoke coming from high areas was a sign of someone cooking in an *appartement* What looked like white flags along the streets were laundry hanging out to dry The quiet sounds I heard from the city were the horns of cars The birds flying above the city were pigeons being kept as pets I recorded those things with Signe for the first time because I could not tell why they were shining or smoking just with an Ajouter I have been to the city a few times but that was only at night to visit the night market next to the Boulogne Park with the master I always waited outside the market and then helped the master carry things back once he returned I have seen people

A lot of people pass by in front of me when I am waiting for the master at the night market A few of them would have a few other expressions but most of the people are in a hurry to buy food just like the master and me Most of the people who pass by are just like me

They can walk and they can carry things and they can speak

That means that is enough

I looked at Lady Beretta while recalling my memories of what I saw in the city She said that the people I saw at the market were not just like me She said they have functions that I do not understand

I asked her if I needed to be that high functioning for my life She did not seem to understand my question

She had explained what becoming human meant and it meant become higher functioning and I do not need those extra functions for my life When I explained myself again while following along with my memories Lady Beretta immediately gave the following explanation Becoming human is not about function It is about your will or well you know No I do not know

Umm you have a sense of taste right That was because you wanted to cook delicious food right Yes I sensed it was necessary after everything I cooked nearly killed the master for a month straight Hm so that old man has put more effort into this than I thought But that is not the point Think about it Rosetta Your sense of taste is your own function but you use it to cook delicious food So what happens once you have the food with the flavor you want I serve it to the master

Not what you do with it Umm I am asking you how it makes you feel How it makes me feel

Do you feel like cheering or get really excited or think you must be some kind of genius after it all works out the way you wanted it to No it is only natural that it turns out that way

Only natural huh And yet I have never had it turn out that way Not even once Oh but I am getting sidetracked So what does that old man say after he eats it He always says it was delicious

And what if he did not say that

He always does

Think about it When you serve him dinner tonight he might get up from the table without saying a word He would not

If I mixed something disgusting into the food while you and the old man were not looking I am one hundred percent certain he would do just that Please do

not do that

I said that to Lady Beretta even though it was not necessary After all she does not seem like the person who would do something like that But I still said it

I stopped her and I stopped my own imagination

I do not know why but I reflexively wished to stop Lady Beretta when I imagined the master getting up from the table without saying a word When I could not say anything more Lady Beretta held my shoulders She apologized but I do not know why

I think she was apologizing because I fell silent but that silence was due to my inability to control my thoughts which makes it my responsibility She does not need to apologize for something that is my responsibility And yet I listened to her apology in silence

She said the following

I am sorry Rosetta There has been so much on my mind lately that I might have been too mean there I am sorry but I thought I had to say that to get you to think about it Rosetta you have gone numb to what it means to enjoy something For one thing it would be pretty funny if that old man still said it was delicious Would it

He has no idea how to adapt and I bet his sense of taste is half dead but I bet you have a decent repertoire of dishes because you thought he would enjoy it and not because you needed something to kill the time Yes it happened when I ran out of ingredients from making the same dish and had to make something else That old man enjoyed it in a different way right

How did you know

You look like you have a wide repertoire of dishes so you must be able to detect those minute changes in his enjoyment of the food But at the same time you have gone numb to it and you seek it out That is not an improvement in your functionality It is becoming more human And wow I am getting preachy here Lady Beretta smiled bitterly as she grabbed my hand and pulled me to my feet We folded up the sheet and walked back to the kitchen where she said the following If you decide you really do want to be human I will help you You

probably will not know if you do for a while yet but keep that in mind Rosetta I still do not know what it means to become human but that possibility must exist inside me I think I will start writing letters

Lady Beretta said I only had to write them and put them in the blue *boîte aux lettres* outside the mansion early the next morning I will use that letter to Signe what it is I enjoy

This will be the first time I have shown someone else my Signe As I was thinking about what to write a question occurred to me Lady Beretta told me to write about what I enjoy but are there things she enjoys I want to ask her that and I also cannot help but think about when she seems to be lost in thought If there is something she wants to say I wish she would say it I will write my letter now but it seems that will be my last job for the day

March 12, 1944

Beretta's Journal

I didn't have class today, so I went to the library again. I nearly passed by that bakery again, but I made a point of avoiding it. I don't want to Sign or Point in front of that bakery for a while.

Now, the librarian lady let me look through the city hall's archives. I'd like to say that makes me lucky, but most of the information is useless.

And I also secretly asked her to send a letter out of the country without being inspected. I think I'll send some questions about the Attesor Project to the publisher of M. Schrier's Death Techno Compilation and...yes, it might be good to send them some of the information I've found. I really don't want to make a big deal out of this personal stuff, but I want to gather as much information as possible.

Also, a letter from Rosetta arrived this evening. It was about what happened yesterday.

Namely, about our discussion of what she enjoys from dinnertime.

The writing was awkward, but I could tell she grasped what happened pretty well. She must be the type who mostly just Points, unlike me. If you're being kind, that makes her modest. If you're being unkind, it makes her easily influenced by her surroundings.

But it was interesting seeing that dinner through someone else's eyes.

All I did was feed the old man the (unintentionally) disgusting *hors d'oeuvre* I had made, let him suffer for a bit, and then fed him the *plat de résistance* that

Rosetta made.

Eating Rosetta's cooking after that bad cooking was sure to get him to voice his thoughts on it. But the letter made it clear she was actually pretty worried about it. I'll quote her with a Point:

<I know the master can find food to be disgusting because he plainly said so when he ate the food Lady Beretta made

What would I do if he felt that way after eating what I made>

I have to wonder if she isn't used to being rejected. But there's no helping that. No one would want to reject her cooking.

But the old man did praise her cooking, so I was satisfied.

Rosetta was relieved and then she crouched down.

She made sure to write about that.

Another Point:

<Strength left my body and I found myself sitting on the floor

I did not know what had happened but I could not stand up

Nevertheless I felt relief in my heart and was glad about what had happened>

That's what it means to enjoy something, but I wonder if she remembers it properly. Well, I'm sure it's fine. Since she felt worried and then relieved, she's clearly got pretty good basic functions.

It's learning those feelings that makes you human.

I kind of understand why I've been so fixated on her.

I must want to find some kind of answer in this world.

My life in France is that of an outsider and also under the German army's rule. Even when I'm viewing the archives, I don't have free access to the deepest levels. Any letters sent out are normally inspected and censored. The city markets are gradually shrinking. And then everything will be Formatted come August.

But I kind of feel like that mansion is cut off from all that. Perhaps because

Rosetta doesn't know about the outside world, I almost forget about the war while I'm with her and she's probably the only person in the city I can really relax around.

I need to give this some thought.

I think I can make her human, but I don't want to force her. I want it to happen because she wants it.

So I first have to teach her what it means to become human. And once she is properly informed about the possibility, I will leave the decision with her.

Now, then. Come to think of it, I need to pick up that map from Mallette today. If I'm going to investigate the Attesor Project, I need a map of Bourgogne where the lab was. I want to say something to Phillip who acquired that old map for me, but I think I'll find another excuse and have everyone get together.

Yes. After that, I'll write letters to Rosetta and the old man and then go to sleep. I especially want to tell that old man to let Rosetta out of the mansion and to let her do a lot of things.

Beretta's Letter: To Rosetta

To my beloved friend...or whatever,

Yahoo. Your letter arrived and there was nothing wrong with it. It was quite good.

Now, listen. Letters are used to convey and confirm the things that you and the recipient need to know. Your letter fulfilled that role just fine. It was far better than the unbelievably crude ones from my friend whose promiscuity might as well be a national treasure...actually that isn't giving you enough credit. Yours was legitimately good and not just good compared to hers, so don't worry.

I will not throw out your letter and I will not forget about it.

I was worried you might find me to be something of an annoyance. I can be pretty cowardly.

Are you looking out at the city? Are you going out in the yard and walking around?

Foxes and wild rabbits live in Boulogne Forest, so you might see some on the mansion hill. I spotted a fox hole on the slope when I was there. So if you do see something that isn't human in the yard, use an Ajouter to look at it. It is probably the same as you, so if you don't do anything to displease it, it should happily leave.

Don't forget that there are always a lot of beings other than you around you.

Um, I keep getting really preachy with you, don't I? I think I'm turning into an old lady now that I'm past 20. Ugh. But now that I have the old man's permission, I'll stop by to play with you from time to time. There's a lot you need to know.

There really is a lot I want to tell you, so I think I'll be by before long.

We live in dangerous times and I could get arrested any day, but let's try to enjoy this.

P.S.

I do have some advice about letter writing. Or about writing in general, really.

There are rules you need to follow when writing. Your letter doesn't follow them and...um...simply put, it's a pretty major flaw.

I don't want to dump a bunch of complicated stuff on you at once, so I'll teach you bit by bit. When I write, there's always a "." at the end. ← This First of all, I want you think about what that means.

Have you thought about it? Now for an example. In your letter, you quoted me like this: "You do not seem to cry at times like this but I will remind you of this You have the right and duty to remember it Old man you know what I mean right"

Try reading that out loud. Could you read it all in one breath?

You couldn't, could you? Do you know why not? Because when I said it, I didn't say it all in one breath. So the way you have written it makes it hard to tell where you are supposed to pause for a breath.

To make it easier to read, you would have to use a Signe to copy down exactly what I said, including the breaths.

But writing down "breath" each time would be lame, right? So we use a symbol to indicate a breath. I'll write it out using that rule.

"You do not seem to cry at times like this but I will remind you of that. You have the right and duty to remember it. Old man you know what I mean right."

That "." tells you when to take a breath. Now read it out loud while putting in the breaths.

Do you get it now? Even when we read silently, we still take breaths in our head. When you speak with the old man, you aren't just speaking continuously, right? You make sure to pause to breathe and to think, don't you?

Think about it. If you do, I think you should know where to put the “.”.

The general rule is to put a “.” where you need to take a breath. ←Like this
Wow, this P.S. has gotten long. Bye for now. I want to speak with you soon and
there might be things you can teach me.

Oh, and you also wrote this in your letter:

<I want to ask her that and I also cannot help but think about when she seems
to be lost in thought If there is something she wants to say I wish she would say
it>

Thanks. Yeah, that’s all.

Heinz Berger's Journal

Today at 10:02, a messenger arrived at the barracks. I will leave here on the 16th and I will arrive in Paris on the 20th. I will spend 2 months teaching basic training there using a weakened Grösse Panzer in order to improve morale. During that time I will also receive the 73rd and 74th Panzer Ritter Project surgeries.

The messenger gave me some information from the Western Front. According to General Rommel who commands the 352nd Infantry Division which includes my platoon, the Allies will make their next major move in mid-June. He suspects they intend to make a landing at the beaches of Normandy.

“But the Führer believes the Allies will cross the Strait of Dover to land at Calais instead, so there is apparently some conflict of opinion.”

At 15:22, I called the 1st Aide and told him about this mission and that my return to the battlefield had been delayed by another 2 months.

At 16:34, an intelligence officer visited. He questioned me about whether or not I believed in the existence of the Attesor Project and what I would do if I did believe in it. As I had previously decided, I told him I intended to investigate the Attesor Project. He saluted and left. I predict they will take some sort of action eventually.

At 20:09, I arranged my things. I once more found the photograph among them. In it, an adult and child are smiling in front of some flowers.

I am unsure if my curiosity has been triggered by those two. But I did not throw out the box containing the photograph and I returned it to my things. Nothing more to report.

March 16, 1944

Guilliaum's Journal

Today's Incidents:

1: Heinz Berge is Coming to Paris

Some information came in from the Resistance in the east. Someone very unpleasant is coming to Paris. I just hope he isn't staying long and that he doesn't visit me.

Well, I haven't seen him since I was taken prisoner in the Morvan Mountains. And I heard he has almost no memories after the Psyche Outer surgery to go along with his mechanical body, so he might not remember me.

2: Small Scale Preparations by the Paris Resistance

The Western Front has come to a standstill. We should assume that means the Allies are preparing for a major attack. And it must be such a major attack that they can't tell us about it. My guess is it will happen in June once the season has settled down. This would probably be easier if Rose Francisca would prophesy it for me.

I need to have the Resistance make some simple publicity work to inform the people of Paris about the presence of the Allies.

3: That Girl is Visiting

Perhaps because she knows nothing of my past, she has been sending me letters and visiting a lot lately.

She seems to think of herself as Rosetta's tutor, but it looks to me like she is

able to relax when she talks with Rosetta. Since Rosetta knows nothing of the outside world, speaking with her might help relieve the tensions of daily life.

German Army General Headquarters Telegram: To the Paris Branch

Urgent.

We have revealed the general outline of the Attesor Project that the Geheimnis Agency has been investigating for some time. During the previous war, the French army performed research and development on what they called the strongest Panzer. This was known as the Attesor Project, but they scrapped it for unknown reasons after completing it. The belongings of those involved have revealed that the results of the research remain somewhere in France. We request that the Paris Branch in central France investigates this matter. We will soon send over the related documents. The current objective is to search out someone who was involved in the project, but most of those in the French army had their memories completely erased. You will instead need to search out information from those not in the army. We will search for related information in the German army records from the time. And as previously reported, Army Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge will take charge of your Panzer training when he arrives. Review the related documents and prepare accordingly. This training will also be a show of force against France. By revealing our Panzer Ritter Project in progress, we can increase our own morale. Over.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 09:00, we left Berlin in a private car. We traveled west on the Autobahn.

At 15:32, we arrived at the 18th Army Barracks in Belgium to stop for the night.

At 16:41, I found Volumes 1-8 of M. Schrier's Ober Geheimnis Compilation on the bookshelf at the restaurant next to the barracks. After some negotiation with the manager, I purchased them with German currency. I will begin investigating once I arrive in Paris.

At 18:35, the 1st Aide and I accompanied the Western Front and discussed the Allies' next attack.

At 20:02, we ended our discussion. As scheduled, I will arrive in Paris on the 20th.

Chapter 4: Knight



第四章

「騎」

1944・03・19
～03・20

"快" は記録によると
結構
強い騎体なのよね——。

03/19/1944 – 03/20/1944

The records say Grazie is a pretty powerful Barrel, don't they?

March 19, 1944

German Army Paris Branch Telegram: To General Headquarters

Received documents concerning the Attesor Project to develop the strongest Panzer. Currently investigating using the French military's internal data network. Over.

Resistance Poster: To the People of Paris

The German army is retreating from the western front!! The time to liberate Paris draws near.

Do not trust the German army's information restrictions and do not give up hope even if this poster is torn down!!

Beretta's Letter: To Mallette, My Neighbor who is Probably Asleep Even Now at Midday

Hi, Mallette. I'm currently taking the Lourd de Marionnette lecture for my second morning class, but I'm so damn bored. The art class before this was interesting, though.

And what's this? Ever since Professor Becarre was arrested, there's always an *Allemande* soldier sitting in a corner of the classroom. Is that to keep an eye on things? I don't like that at all. Especially today's strict-looking old man whose insignia suggests is an Écrivain. The practice today will apparently be a quick mock battle against that old man.

I guess this means the Germans are gradually tightening their grip. And we only just learned in political science class that control of the media and education is a step toward dictatorship.

Anyway, I'm writing this letter during class, so I'll drop it in your room's *boîte aux lettres*. I'm sure you'll be asleep until the afternoon anyway.

You might miss out on a lot if you sleep in today. It was pretty noisy outside this morning. While you were sleeping, the Paris Resistance covered the streets with posters to inform everyone that the German military is retreating.

That means the people of Paris will have Ajouter-ed that information. I wonder what everyone else will do.

But, well, the patrols from tonight on are probably going to be a real pain.

You'll get arrested too if you're out wandering at night. I know I don't have to remind you, but you're half Jewish. And you don't want them using that as an excuse to harass you, right? That was why the soldiers were hassling you when we first met.

Not that complaining in a letter is going to change anything.

So I'm stuck here in this Lourd de Marionnette lecture and then I have to go through with the practice afterwards, but why are we even doing this? If only the Germans would accuse this class of training the resistance and cancel the rest of the classes just for me. Oh, well.

Besides, the Germans have put power restrictions on every Appareil in France, so there aren't any in Paris that can fight properly. Without proper power and weapons, an Appareil is the same as a car.

I wonder what they'll do about the Lourd de Marionnette battle during the school festival. Only a beginner would enjoy Recréa-ing into an underpowered Lourd de Marionnette. A veteran wouldn't be able to stand it. Even if you can only use it for a short time, I just want to use a Full Drive Start and-...well, you wouldn't know what any of this means.

Ever since the Germans were stationed here, the Lourd de Marionnette battle at the year-end festival and school festival has had a German Lourd de Écrivain take part as a special guest. A student doesn't stand a chance against a soldier, but they make it even more unfair because their Appareil isn't power restricted. The librarian lady at the library I often visit says it's meant as a show of force.

But at last year's year-end festival, I kicked the German Lourd de Marionnette's ass and won, so some people are apparently hoping I'll do it again this year. A representative of the economics department said I'm their #1 recommendation. I Ajouter-ed a bulletin board earlier and that's what it said. I'll probably never hear the end of it from Phillip if I accept.

Anyway, summer break is coming up soon, so classes and life are both getting pretty busy. While everyone at the *appartement* is heading back home like you are, I think I'll enjoy a carefree *vacance* in Paris.

Oh, the practice is about to begin. Like usual, of the three Lourd de Marionnettes in the storage rooms, the instructor gets one and we do some quick mock battles with the male and female one left over. The guys always get so excited. They're so childish.

Wait, what? The professor is saying I'm supposed to Recréa, too.

His line was pretty amazing:

“Beretta already has a no-limits Lourd de Marionnette license and was given the honor of being selected as the economics representative for the school festival’s Lourd de Marionnette battle, but she is still diligently attending the lesson today. The rest of you could learn a thing or two from... (Bleh, the old man’s talking too fast to write down the rest.)”

But I’m sorry, professor, I wasn’t being remotely diligent. I’ve been sitting here writing this letter.

By the way, the guys’ excitement cooled in a hurry when they heard I would be Recréa-ing. And not because they were moved by my “diligent example” or because of the qualifications the professor listed off. No, I’m sure it’s because I’m the one that won at last year’s year-end festival.

Oh, and most of the girls in the class are fad-followers who only came over to see me after they heard the rumors.

I can’t believe this. If only transfer students weren’t required to take this class.

“We have a special class just for transfer students. Simply attending university will earn you a Lourd de Marionnette license.”

I get that it’s one of their selling points for transfer students, but it’s pretty pointless for me since I already have a no-limits license.

Also, I haven’t been too crazy about piloting Lourd de Marionnettes lately. It probably seems weird to see a Lourd de Marionnette lover like me writing that, but, well, it’s like your period. Women just have those moods sometimes.

Why is it, Mallette? It’s like my personality changes a little when I’m piloting one.

And my opponent this time is the German Lourd de Écrivain sitting so arrogantly in the corner there.

I’m a little worried. Okay, I’ll seal this up before Recréa-ing. Bye.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

And with that, I've finished the Write Bring and stepped out into the school's mock battlefield. I'll start off with a Point.

<The bowl-shaped colosseum is huge even when viewed from my 8-yard height.> Has this place been around for a long time, I wonder? I know I've heard that Sorbonne University has existed since the middle ages.

Hm. But, well, the girls are there in the stands, but there's no one else there, not even the professor. Are all the guys still holed up in the eastern storage room? Well, they're doing a forced Write Bring on someone who isn't used to it, so I guess it'll take some time.

I suppose I'll move around a bit now.

HLP018 77-LL Grazie is the Barrel I used during last year's year-end festival. It's a female Heavy Barrel from World War One, so it's kind of impressive it's held together so well. In a Heavy Barrel museum, it would rank at a preservation level of B.

The emblems on the shoulders are angel wings.

Grazie's Over Emblem is a mobility-increasing ability called Ange, but I've never activated it. In San Francisco of '98, Grazie was completely outdated and its modern version, Joie, has an attack Over Emblem called Tout Ange.

But the records say Grazie is a pretty powerful Barrel, don't they? It inherited the poor wire cylinder output adjustment of the previous model, Sourire, but its instantaneous power can give a modern Barrel a run for its money.

As always, this girl is very well maintained. Despite being such an old model, the arms move just fine and they don't catch at all. She writes to the memory bank with decent speed, too.

What I didn't like was when I Pointed in the storage room and saw the armored dress to hide my nudity was the same 20-year-old design from last year and that the Barrel barely had any armor on it. This is a female model, but it's more like shiny skin than jewel-like skin.

And the legs are a little worrying. They're a bit skinny, but the lubrication oil used in them is old. I pointed it out before, but it's still using the same oil as the arms. The legs bear more weight than the arms, so I'd prefer more viscous oil than in the arms. It's about endurance over mobility.

But I guess there's nothing I can do about the power restriction. It can probably run, but I doubt it can hold its ground. A few of the wire cylinders would probably be taken out. But they've left it with enough power to move around, so is that what they call "German generosity" or are they just stupid? If I gathered spare parts from across France, I could probably build a full Barrel on this level.

But, well, I guess it is true that Barrels are outdated.

The armor is thinner than a tank's, they make a big target, and they aren't as maneuverable as an airplane.

They're intimidating as hell, though. That's why they're used in cities and infantry divisions.

I bet the Germans are doing a lot of research to find some tech that will let them rival modern weaponry. After all, that country is gathering Death Techno. Not that I'm much different there...well, I should stop thinking about that. The others might Sign these memories later on.

But I can't believe this. The joints feel all hollow, which is kind of sad.

Oh, and I can't stand that my weapon is a wooden sword. The Germans have done a real thorough job of confiscating everything. It was a wooden spear back at the year-end festival, wasn't it?

I'm a Phalanx. A spear-user. That's the real difference between me and my grandma, who taught all about Heavy Barrels. She never once performed a Write Bring in front of me, but she's known as the Sword Lady, so she must have used a sword.

I wonder how she's doing. I've been feeling a bit down lately.

And I know why.

I want to ask someone for advice and I have so much to think about, but there's no one I can talk with. I'm an outsider in this world and everything I'm thinking is either out of character for me or is something I'm not allowed to say. I can't be like that old man I saw at the bakery.

I might be worrying Rosetta with all this. She said this in an earlier letter: <And I am thinking about how you sometimes look like you are lost in thought If there is something you want to say I hope you will tell me> If she wants to become human and trusts me, maybe I could tell her. Tell her about this world and the incident I'm involved in. And that I'm a Knight Striker, but I couldn't protect some people.

Wow, this is getting dark. I need to distract myself.

“Activate Wide-Range Vision: Success”

I had only been using the anti-ground vision, but now my vision spread out to include the sky and the horizon.

My vision was never this wide as a human. This mode uses the two anti-ground sight devices, the one superior eye sight device on the forehead, and the compound eye sight devices on the left and right of the head. There just aren't words to describe how amazing it is to see from all of those eyes at once.

My view covers approximately 120 degrees in front, up, down, left, and right, for a total of 240 degrees in all. That lets me hold both the heavens and the earth in my hand at once.

I gain that humanly-impossible vision by combining my Lives with the machine.

Right now, I can see the blue sky, the city of Paris beyond the mock battlefield's walls, and the earthen ground.

This is one of the reasons I like piloting Heavy Barrels.

A Knight Striker has power and is duty-bound to protect, but this vision is the greatest freedom.

That which is filled with the blue sky.

That which is covered by the red dirt.

I name thee heaven and earth.

Where the wind howls bravely.

Where the sand dances gently.

I view thee as heaven and earth.

So that no one would grieve again.

That which is endless and cannot be grasped.

That which is vast and cannot be held.

I am with thee.

I really understand what that Knight Striker song is trying to say.

I mean, the winter sky is so very tall. Well, I'm not sure what I'm Signing here now, but while the skies in America were always unbelievably vast and unimaginably blue, the sky of Paris is something else entirely.

I might just not be used to the rules of Signing since I'm not a resident of Paris, but I feel like you can't see Paris's sky unless you're searching for it. I can probably see it by Pointing an azure sky, but it takes Signing to see the blue sky I really want to see.

So seeing Paris's sky brings me joy when I look up and see it.

And looking to the sky with a Heavy Barrel's vision only strengthens that feeling.

If I confirm my own presence here below the sky, I feel like I'll suddenly find the sky is gone.

I raised my head and looked into the sky. It felt like I could see the wind. Yeah.

But the other side really was slow. What were they doing?

I'll Point real quick.

<There is still no sign of anything leaving the boys storage room.> Whelp. Meanwhile, I came out almost immediately and everyone's waiting. The girls

are probably shouting from the colosseum stands by now. I don't feel like Pointing that, though.

Ugh.

I should've claimed I was on my period and skipped out on this.

But I really do like Write Bringing into Heavy Barrels.

I'd better get an S instead of just an A for this class.

Oh, I should Point.

<The side door to the boys storage room is slowly opening to the side and a male Heavy Barrel made from black steel is unsteadily walking out.

It is an HMP035 22-LL Guerre.>

That's the average male Heavy Barrel from World War One. It looks a little shakier than when I saw it last year, but I guess you can't expect much when there's a boy piloting it. Both of these are probably used military models. After all, there were signs of some insignia being scraped off next to the ladder up to the Study on mine.

The other one is probably the same.

And...huh? The instructor's came out too, but...

<It is an MMP055 07-LC Jagdhund.>

Huh? A Middle Barrel? Even if we have this power restriction, are they mocking us?

And that body. It can't be...

<There is a sign of major repairs to the center of the Jagdhund's chest armor.

It was likely damaged in some kind of battle recently.> Oh, crap. Was that damage from me? If so, this could be bad. It's going to be really awkward. I hope he doesn't have any regrets.

Well, no one'll find out as long as they don't read this memory bank. I'll just erase it a bit as I cancel the Write Bring.

I wrote some oddly mellow stuff toward the start.

<The boys and the professor have entered the stands. The professor is speaking in a loud voice: “Now, please follow the instructor’s lead and engage in some light sparring.”

The Jagdhund nodded and raised its wooden sword.>

He’s aiming it toward me?

...Hmm.

Does that mean he chose me as an opponent before the boy? I’m going to remain suspicious and Sign.

Have you heard about last year’s festival from someone? Perhaps that a female Knight Striker from this school humiliated a German Panzer Kavalier?

Well, it doesn’t matter either way. I’ll just say what I have to say.

“I’m looking forward to the lesson you have for me.”

So let’s get this started!!

Lourd de Marionnette Professor Voith Malraux's Scoresheet: Beretta's Score

First, I will write down the result of the first battle.

Her skill at making her opponent look good while ultimately winning is completely abnormal.

The way she moved around to cover for the weak legs, which are the one defect of the HLP018 line, reminded me of a musical dance and I completely understand why she was recommended as a Lourd de Écrivain for the school festival.

The first mock battle was a complete victory. She was using a power-restricted model against an MMP055, which is a quite powerful despite being a Forma de Marionnette, but she still managed to remain in complete control of the battle and knock the wooden sword out of her opponent's grasp. From beginning to end, I have to give her an S rating.

And now we are about to begin a second battle at the instructor's request.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

Ugh. He wants to fight a second battle? Since when did we start using "first to two" rules? Besides, I think the boy in the Guerre has got to be bored over there in the corner.

A soldier needs to be a little more prepared to accept defeat.

I should probably Point just to be on the safe side.

<After picking back up its wooden sword, the Jagdhund raises it and stops moving.

The atmosphere suggests this will no longer just be some light sparring.> Looks like my suspicions from before were correct. Well, fine. Let's do this.

And while I'm thinking that...

<The Jagdhund suddenly moved.>

Oh? You've got some skill at surprise attacks.

I dodged.

I thought Germany was supposed to be the country of Kavaliers!? A male Middle Barrel is making a surprise attack on a female opponent right as the battle begins!? Okay, you've got guts. That grazed my head, you bastard. But if you're gonna make a horizontal swing of the sword, aim for my body, not my head. And if you're gonna make a vertical swing, aim for my head, not my shoulder.

Can you hear me?

Of course you can't.

<He charges at me.>

He made one attack.

He made two attacks.

He made three attacks.

I could predict them all, so I didn't bother Pointing.

They'll all just be over-the-top swishes through empty air. He might've cut off the reflexes from his pain sensors. Your Barrel was just repaired, so move around too much and you'll spew oil.

<Immediately after the fourth jab, a black liquid flows out of the Jagdhund's right shoulder.

It is lubricant oil.>

See? What'd I tell you? I can hear a stir in the crowd...or so I'll say.

But a single bind cylinder doesn't count as an injury for a male Middle Barrel, right? If that was enough to cause a malfunction, it would never be used in actual combat.

<It jabs forward.>

That was nicely done.

But you left an opening. I'll take out the shoulder of your armored dress and the armor panel below.

Ready, set...

And got it.

<I hear the sound of wood on metal.>

See? It was the opposite shoulder.

<I hear another nice sound.>

This is pretty easy. Or rather, the enemy is too naïve.

Come to think of it, Phillip said he hasn't Write Bringed into a Heavy Barrel for about a decade, but I wonder how he did it back then? Did he go the manly route and jam himself in there all at once?

...Ah.

That phrasing was kind of lewd. Like something Mallette would say.

But it's not like I'm hoping for anything like that. We did kiss, but I don't really want to go against what my parents would want. Plus, he's with the Germans right now.

...And he dies.

<The black Barrel corrects its posture and makes an obvious charge.> Hold on, hold on, hold on. Wait, wait, wait. You damn enemy, don't come charging in while I'm thinking. And you don't have to do that "oryaaaaaaaaaaaaah" yell. Are you a city thug or something?

I dodged. Hmm. In thaaat case...

<"Noryaaaaaaaaaaaaah!">

No, you idiot. And that "doryaaaaaaaaaaaaah" isn't any better.

Dodge, dodge. Hmm. Ah, hey, "soryaaaaaaaaaaaaah" doesn't work either.

I've only been Signing and saying whatever I wanted without Pointing at all, but since I'm unharmed, that must mean that my Signing has been almost the same as reality.

That means the enemy is moving like I predicted.

I can't believe this.

I just can't get into it. Part of that is the pathetic opponent, but I've also had too much on my mind. You move a Heavy Barrel with your mind instead of your muscles, so letting your mind wander is a really bad idea.

Fine, then. I'll just finish this up all at once.

I'll put some distance between us.

Female Heavy Barrels are generally lacking in power. And that's made all the worse by the power restriction. The trick to winning is either to make a charge or to use your opponent's movements for a counterattack.

In boxing terms, it's like being an out-boxer.

I raised my weapon.

I had to measure the exact distance from the enemy, so I Pointed.

<There are approximately 20 yards between us.

He is charging forward to fill that gap.> I think I'll charge forward too and show him a bit of a combat performance.

I held the wooden sword's pommel inside my fist. My shoulder could not move my hand around well with the decorations in the way, but I only needed a straight-line movement from here.

The enemy arrived within my attack range of 15 yards.

I thrust the wooden sword toward where his face should be.

In fact, I threw it. It was a nice throw.

My aim should've been perfect, so let's Point.

<The wooden sword pierces the Jagdhund's face windshield.

But that is not enough to destroy a male Middle Barrel's facial components which are made with a monocoque structure.

The battle continues.

My opponent maintains his momentum as he charges forward with the wooden sword still stabbed into his face.> I charged in as well. I dodged right before he hit.

At the same time, I swung my leg like I was dancing and knocked his legs out from under him.

He tripped forward. Once he landed on his face, the sword would pierce straight through and out the back of his head.

Ugh, actually let's not do that.

I grabbed the tripping opponent's armored dress for just an instant and kicked him to the side.

<The Jagdhund flies through the air and flips face up.> It's kind of scary how much my predictions match what happens.

He probably fell to the ground with a loud crash. That's something you can't

let happen with a machine like a Heavy Barrel. Some parts will break from its own weight and you can't get out since the Study is located on its back.

But if you're a Knight Striker, then get up on your own. Surely that didn't knock you out.

Right? Don't you think, audience?

<Cheers rise from the stands.>

Okay, okay. That's what I'm talking about. Is it because I defeated an *Allemande* soldier that everyone's so excited?

Yeah. I'll write that I took a breath and found that the surrounding scene put me in a good mood.

Both heaven and earth filled my vision at once. This is the real purpose for Write Bringing into a Heavy Barrel.

Now, time to end the Write Bring.

March 20, 1944

Heinz Berger's Journal

Today at 19:02, I arrived in Paris.

At 20:15, I visited the German army's Paris branch. I received the paperwork for my Panzer unit training duty that was prepared along with the notification of my arrival.

At 21:23, I visited the Panzer unit training ground in the Chantelle region on the outskirts of Paris. It was very quiet as there was no night training being held, but I did see a Mittel Panzer undergoing repairs in the hangar.

The workers told me a soldier had joined in some Kavalier training at Sorbonne University and lost after having his Panzer tripped. I have decided this is worth considering for the training beginning tomorrow.

I also saw an officer assisting the workers in the hangar. Upon inquiry, he informed me his name is Phillip Missel. He wore an earring bearing a sword emblem. I left after confirming that he is related to Jean Missel, the former Chevalier de Paris who earned much fame during the previous Great War.

At 22:05, I returned to the barracks.

Starting tomorrow, I will take part in training three times a week and spend the rest of my time investigating the Attesor Project.

Chapter 5: Books



第五章

「書」

1944・03・21
～03・25

A計画調査のために
図書館へ赴く予定——。

03/21/1944 - 03/25/1944

I plan to visit the library to investigate the Attensor Project

March 21, 1944

Letter from Sword Lady #8: To Beretta who Inherited my Name

Are you reading this, Beretta who inherited my name?

I can't believe this. I've already used up half of the letter set and ink from US Army Development. But we can't help how limited the quantity is. These are special products created by gathering up antique paper and ink that existed in the forties and doing some emblem processing. Without this, you wouldn't be able to bring these into that world, so that's just the way it is.

The former Allied soldier in charge of you "transfer students" mentioned that he wished they had created a lot more stuff back then. Because anything made outside of France before August 6, 1943 can be brought into the city without the immune system catching it. Putting together a full set of supplies from back then isn't exactly easy here in '98.

Just processing your own genetic structure to match the space-time Lives of that time is hard enough, but we also have to worry about your clothes and accessories. Even if Virtual City DT is skilled with Live processing, it still can't be easy.

From what I've heard, they might have to start using kimonos from Japan starting next year.

I hope your clothes weren't blown off of you when you arrived in Paris. It's a little late now, but that can happen because only clothes from the time period can get inside.

The Live immune system that supports France is a weird thing.

First Erasers like me and anyone else who has been in there once before is kicked out, but anything that was anywhere except France at the time is allowed in the first time.

Then when the Format hits, it notices something isn't right and never lets that in again.

That is why there are no time paradoxes inside Paris.

Those of us familiar with the First Format time period aren't allowed in and any changes to history are reset with each Format. Thanks to that and the immune system, any changes with an external cause can only be tried once.

And the immune system grows stronger each year, so there are fewer and fewer changes inside.

France wants to take good care of itself from that time. Do you understand, Beretta?

France is gradually solidifying itself and closing itself off more completely.

I hope France is freed from that Rondeau, though.

Then again, that would send the entire world back to '44.

So France must be allowed to fully close itself off and it will one day disappear from the world. It's a complicated thing.

...Now, then. Since this is the 8th letter, it must be March there.

But not much of note should happen that month.

Still, are there a number of things you can't come to terms with? When it was me, I couldn't stand being unable to tell everyone I was an Allied special agent, so are you feeling something similar?

Well, I'm sure you have your issues, whatever they might be.

You may have made some temporary friends and maybe a boyfriend. Just like me, you're a pretty attractive woman when you bother to behave. And just like me, you may have met someone you wish you could promise your future to.

But, stay strong, Beretta who inherited my name.

If you come across a problem you can't solve and it has to do with history,

politics, or the course of the war, I could give you an accurate answer by looking back in my memories. But your personal problems are something only you can solve.

Do you remember that important lesson I'm always telling you?

Worrying about things is not a bad thing.

What is bad is keeping those worries in your head and never acting on them. A Knight Striker moves the Barrel with the power of their will while Write Bringing, right? This is the same. Your will leads to action. France is destined to Format, but it also carries a number of possibilities and continues to move. It can still move. It has yet to fully solidify.

And one of those possibilities must be a method of freeing it from the Rondeau.

Well, that's all I can say on that. If I waste any more ink, I'll run out.

I am praying that you are not in too much trouble.

While I write all 13 letters in a single night.

Beretta's Journal

School is off for the week as is the custom during Easter.

That's why I am writing this entry at the city hall. I brought the introduction letter the librarian lady gave me and they let me check the documents room in the basement. But it wasn't easy getting to this point. I mean, I'm just some kid with an American accent, so the old guy at the reception desk just kept Signing and refusing to look at the letter. It took a lot of work getting him to Point.

The basement documents room seemed larger than the library's lower level.

Below France there is a network of underground passages between catacombs and they said the documents room was originally a part of that. Come to think of it, that weird German adventurer discovered the grave of the Mother of a Thousand Kings underground here.

Even though we have the week off for Easter, the boys taking the Heavy Barrel class are holding mock battles for anyone who wants more practice. Since I beat up the instructor before, the boys' Heavy Barrel couldn't do anything.

Since it's voluntary, I don't think I'll join them. Just watching would be boring and Write Bringing again probably wouldn't be the best idea. Both because of that previous mock battle and because I'm just not feeling real into it right now.

I know I shouldn't just sit around worrying like this, but I can't help but wonder.

What does it mean to Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel?

I couldn't protect the others and I regret what happened, but I did fight a minor battle with the Germans that night. Some of them probably died. When I place my dead comrades and the dead enemies on the scale, how am I supposed to read the result?

A Knight Striker is supposed to protect people.

When a lot happened as a kid and I started wanting that power, I found a certain book in our study and realized that power was a lot closer to home than I thought.

That is the power to protect what matters most to you.

That's when I grew to love Heavy Barrels in addition to Sein Fraus and I started asking my grandma about Knight Strikers and about my great-grandfather Jack McWild.

I thought I understood all this. I even helped a vigilante group at Image City – SF and defeated Live monsters with a Heavy Barrel. I was satisfied with that, but it isn't that easy.

Can a Knight Striker really protect people?

And even if they can, can I do it?

It's such a weird thing to worry about. It's a lot like my thoughts about Rosetta. I kind of hope she wants to become human and this is similar.

I do want to find the answer.

In this reality which is doomed to disappear, I want to make Rosetta human and I want to find out what a Knight Striker is. One of those will be Formatted and the other won't, but neither one will disappear as far as I am concerned. That's how it works.

<The current time is 3:30 PM.>

It's about time to head back. Today, I'll read over the documents at home and check for a change of address notification or something like that. If it goes well, I might figure out where my great-grandmother moved tonight.

I'll also select any documents related to the Attesor Project and make copies.

The old guy at the reception desk wasn't happy about it, but I gathered all of the information I might need.

And I've made up my mind on one thing.

Tonight, I'm going to write a letter to M. Schrier. I decided I can't just put it off

and I have to try everything I can. So I'll write a letter to M. Schrier tonight and try to force an answer out of France's Lives. I'll push things outside the pre-established harmony and wait to see what kind of response France will give me to hide it. I'll visit the library tomorrow and give the letter to the librarian. But I'll have to write that letter while pretending to be someone from this time period. Using my grandma would probably be best.

Heinz Berge's Journal

At 09:30, I greeted the Panzer unit at the army's Paris branch office. Every member of the day shift gathered at the Panzer training ground.

At 11:00, we began the drills. As an example, I sliced through three Panther tank shells fired at me from head on. With a break in the middle, I fought 28 mock battles against both the day shift and the night shift that swapped out at 19:00. None of them could last three battles in a row, but I have determined this gave them all an opportunity to obey me.

At 20:30, I returned to the barracks. My 1st Aide informed me that my 2nd Aide would also be arriving from my platoon stationed at Normandy. "Please do not push yourself too hard, Lieutenant Colonel."

He gave me that advice, but I held back on responding as I still do not have a reference point for defining "too hard".

At 22:00, I read the Ober Geheimnis Compilation. In the 7th volume, 30 pages were spent on the Attesor Project. Most of it felt like it was merely written by a curious third party, but I believe fragments of the truth can be found there.

The Attesor Project was meant to develop the strongest Panzer and I have found I feel hostility toward it. I joined the Panzer Ritter Project to become the strongest. Am I trying to learn about the Attesor Project to determine its strength?

I am off duty tomorrow, so I plan to visit the library to investigate the Attesor Project.

Beretta's Letter: House Thanksure Publishing – To M. Schrier

As the early spring wind blows in, I hope you are doing well.

This is my first time writing you. I am Beretta McWild, a student living in Paris.

A few years ago, I grew interested in the Attesor Project to develop the strongest Barrel that is mentioned in Volume 7 of your Death Techno Compilation and I am currently investigating it as an exchange student in Paris. (The German army occupied France soon after I arrived four years ago and I am unable to escape, so assume this letter reached you along a special route.) This may be presumptuous of me, but I would like to ask something of you.

If you have any documents, copies of documents, or other reference materials from the research into the Attesor Project for your Death Techno Compilation, could you possibly just give me a list of what they are? I know this is an unreasonable request for someone who must be as busy as you during this war, but please help me out if at all possible.

My father was apparently a leader of the Attesor Project and he was killed by someone in Paris five years ago.

I do not know why, but it may have been related to that project. (Although I do not see what value a plan that had been abandoned and erased from people's memories could have.) My father never told me or my mother anything about the Attesor Project. I would like to uncover the full picture of that project. With this letter, I will include copies of the reports I believe to be connected to the Attesor Project that I found here in Paris as well as the records my father left behind. Hopefully they will be of some use to you.

I should probably be sending a fan letter, but I am sending you this instead. Sorry about that.

If you are willing to reply, then send it to someone known as the High Priestess using the South Sea Cruise Post. Then it should reach me along a special route.

Sorry for interrupting your busy schedule.

I am praying you will remain successful in the future.

March 22, 1944

Beretta's Journal

I'm in the library today.

I secretly handed the librarian the letter and package, but she chuckled when she saw who it was addressed to. M. Schrier is apparently well known for going around with his assistant and doing crazy things against the Germans. It was a good reminder that this is back when he was doing that in real time. It felt like finding myself inside a book.

(Well, you could kind of say this city is inside the book of the Format Rondeau.)

This was the first time the librarian asked me what I've been investigating all this time. Well, I actually Pointed and realized she's been asking me that this entire time. We always had such a simple conversation during the checkout process that I never even thought she might be asking that.

When I said I was investigating the Attesor Project, it was the library director next to her who reacted first. That chicken-like old man smiled bitterly and mentioned a commotion in the Bourgogne region 25 years ago where a giant appeared and devoured some German troops, but then he said this:

"But if that project had succeeded, France wouldn't be like this now."

While looking through all the documents, I've realized two things: some powerful military commander definitely carried out the project in extreme secrecy (so that they would not lose any status if it failed) and the results of the experiments were only seen in the Bourgogne region.

The majority of the witnesses were in the Bourgogne region's Herlde village in the Morvan mountains. 25 years ago, the German army apparently passed through that mountain corridor in an attempt to take the shortest route west. Because that corridor is the only way to pass through those central French mountains without taking any damage from the black dragon there. The journey takes six days through there, but more than two weeks if you go around.

But the records say the people of Herlde didn't know there was an Attesor Project lab deep in the mountains there. Then what cover story did Jack McWild and the others use when they visited the village?

I solved that mystery today. One of the documents was a newspaper article based on independent research of the French army at the time and it contained what appears to be the answer. (I actually found this article last year, but I didn't realize it was so important until now. I'm so pathetic.)

<The French army has announced it will begin mining rare materials in the Morvan mountains.>

There was more to the article saying that a survey team would be sent in first to perform a few geological surveys, so that team would be entering the Morvan mountains a few different times.

A deeper inspection of the military records revealed that survey team to be the Weapons Development Office's 781st Unit, but their budget was not listed and the people on the unit were never specified. Nor did it ever mention a length of their survey or that they had ever completed it. It sounded a lot like personal troops or a ghost unit.

The timing matched perfectly with when Jack McWild and his group had been holed up in the Morvan mountains and occasionally descending to Herlde for either a break or to resupply. So I Signed that the unit was in fact the cover story they used in the Bourgogne region.

When the villagers asked them what soldiers were doing there, they would have responded that they were performing a geological survey. They had probably known what the "giant that ate the German troops" was, but they may have feigned fear and tried to build up the commotion further.

The outlines of Jack McWild's character were coming into view. He must have loved excitement, just like a real American.

I'm understanding more and more. But even if this tells me that the Attesor Project really did exist, I still don't know what kind of project it was. What was it for?

<The current time is 3:00 PM.>

Oh, I should probably get going. The documents I searched last night told me what room my grandma used to live in, so I think I'll visit there. I haven't found any change of address info yet, but I have a starting point.

Then I'll write a letter for Rosetta. When I've been focused on the Attesor Project all day, I end up zoning out and growing curious how he's doing.

But I am starting to wonder one thing.

I want her to evolve, but is that what she wants?

I might find the answer to that soon and this may be a crossroads.

Is she willing to become human, worry about so many things, and evolve in exchange for the joy of gaining emotions? It isn't wrong to worry about things as my grandma always said, but I haven't figured things out quite that far. So I kind of want to see for myself.

Does she or does she not truly want to become human? That must be connected to what I'm worrying about.

If she wants to become human as her Sein Frau destiny, then I think I'll take a serious step forward too. I will face the unavoidable fact that I am a Knight Striker and I must protect people.

<The current time is 3:02 PM.>

Oh, I need to hurry out of here.

Come to think of it, the anniversary of Jack McWild's death is coming up. I need to think of something to do for that.

Heinz Berge's Journal

At 09:30, I was asked to make an appearance at the army's Paris branch office and I arrived there at 10:05. The branch commander said there was a problem with yesterday's drills. It was unclear how, so I asked. He said one of the soldiers who received the training was the son of an influential general. That had no connection to the drills themselves, so I rejected the branch commander's suggestion. I am here on orders from the general headquarters, so I must make it clear a mere branch commander cannot influence my actions.

At 12:07, I left the branch office.

At 13:00, I checked a road map of Paris at the barracks reception desk and ran across Phillip Missel who I had conversed with the day before last. During our short conversation, I asked him where the library was located. When he asked if I was investigating something, I mentioned the Attesor Project. It was brief, but a look of surprise appeared on his face. We parted ways without asking any further questions.

At 15:07, I arrived at Paris's central library. When I asked for the locations of the materials I wished for, I was informed most of them were currently checked out. I acquired the ones that were not and returned to the barracks at 18:10.

At 19:30, I read through the materials. My memories from World War One really are gradually returning. At the time, I had become the third generation of the Berge family to reach the rank of lieutenant and I led a platoon near the border of France and Belgium.

At the time, the French army supposedly had a project to develop the most powerful Panzer. I must find out whether that project actually existed and what results it had.

At 22:05, I finished reading the materials. Only fragments of my old memories had returned and I realized something upon confirming that none of them had

any connection to the Attensor Project.

“Why are my memories returning?”

This independent research was a way to determine what exactly the Attensor Project had been, but today’s activities almost felt like I was trying to restore my memories using that investigation.

I predict that I had some kind of contact with the Attensor Project in the past.

I have no way of knowing if those memories have simply yet to return or if they have and I have not recognized them as such.

Once I complete tomorrow’s drills, I plan to visit the military document room and check for any records from the time.

Sorbonne University Student Message Board: To Students of the Practical Lourd de Marionnettes Class

On 3/26, Class 3-CG “Practical Lourd de Marionnettes” will hold a review for any who wish to attend.

Please gather at the school’s mock battleground at 3 PM if you wish to participate.

March 23, 1944

Letter Left by Phillip: To Beretta

I'm writing this before heading to the branch office this morning.

I gave you a map via Mallette before, but I seriously regret that. I know you are investigating the Attesor Project (which we laughed off as a superstition at one point), but I met a German who is seriously searching for that. You've probably heard his name before: Army Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge. He is the Lourd de Écrivain who remade his own body for using a Lourd de Marionnette in the Panzer Ritter Project.

I don't know why he's searching for that, but he is in the German army and he is a Lieutenant Colonel in name only. His actual authority is on the level of a general. (It had something to do with a Lieutenant Colonel being the absolute maximum rank that would allow him to appear here as a platoon leader.) You'll be in serious trouble if he sets his sights on you. I know you're upset with me, but don't do anything that would draw the Germans' attention.

At the very least, forget all about the Attesor Project until the end of the war...no, until Heinz Berge leaves Paris at the end of May. And like I said before, distance yourself from Lourd de Marionnettes. Heinz Berge is retraining the troops in Paris. Rumor has it he sliced through three tank shells fired at him from almost point blank range. So the Lourd de Marionnette battle at the school festival will involve a Lourd de Écrivain trained by him.

You beat up a military opponent during class after I told you to stop, didn't you? After last year and that, the branch office's Lourd de Marionnette troops are fighting over who gets to visit Sorbonne University and take part in the

Lourd de Marionnette battle.

The university is holding a review for their Practical Lourd de Marionnettes class on the 26th, but don't you dare show up to that.

Just lie low for a while. That's all I'm asking.

Beretta's Journal

Today I'm writing my journal at home during the night. I'll start by continuing where I left off yesterday.

I found my grandma's house. It was surprisingly close by. It's an *appartement* in the residential area north of Tuileries Garden. The landlord said she remembers me (well, my grandma) and rubbed my head before showing me the room which is now vacant.

It was a two bedroom *appartement* with a low ceiling. The wooden walls were painted a cream color, perhaps because my grandma begged for it as a kid.

They had apparently actually been renting two rooms, but one of them has a resident now. And the one I had seen had miraculously been vacant since they had moved out. It had apparently been used as a Sein Frau maintenance storeroom. Those two rooms had contained my grandma's entire life and everything I had inherited had been born there.

According to the landlord, my great-grandmother, Rose Francisca, had sent a few letters since moving. Assuming she had not thrown out the letters, she promised to give me the contact information.

Now, I spent all day gathering materials, hanging my blanket on the balcony to dry, and then taking it back down. When I checked the mail in the morning, I found letters from Rosetta and Phillip.

Rosetta had apparently been maintaining the garden properly and she was spending more time out in the garden. She also asked how to use ... and —, so I wrote a reply to answer her.

I told her they were called an ellipsis and an em dash. And that the ellipsis had exactly three dots. I was really just passing on information I had learned at school in San Francisco, but I was able to write the letter and she would remember it. I also wrote a quick letter for that old man:

“I want to teach Rosetta how to cook, so let her out of the house.”

I wasn't sure if that would get through to him, but I figured it was worth asking. It was about time for her to head out beyond the garden and the food of hers I had eaten before just seemed to suit my tastes really well. Mallette and the others are all terrible cooks, so I wanted to invite Rosetta to a cooking get-together with them all. I wasn't sure if that old man would allow it, but I could always complain incessantly.

And I think I'm going to make a decision here.

If she is simply a Sein Frau who likes cooking, then I won't try to make her evolve as a human any further. If she only wants to increase her functional ability and not as a human, then I'll go along with that. But if that isn't the case, then I'll even more eagerly go along with what she wants.

Now, the problem is Phillip. It's like he can't stop lecturing me. What did he think telling me that would accomplish? But I'm also kind of thankful. It feels like none of his business, but it also means he wanted to warn someone as unpleasant as me.

But this is an important time. I had sent my letter to M. Schrier (well, to France really) and a lot of information was coming together. Plus, the war was at something of a standstill. The next big move would be the Normandy landing on June 6. France will get a lot busier then and I probably won't be able to gather materials any longer. By then, I want to have found most all the materials I need and to visit the Bourgogne region. Although I can probably manage with the materials I already have.

But telling Phillip all this would probably be wasted effort. I honestly don't know if I'll be taking part in the Heavy Barrel battle. I was nominated, but it's really just up to my mood. After all, that battle is like a game, but I really don't feel like doing it at this point.

I only want to Write Bring when I have some serious thinking to do.

I'll probably come up with a conclusive answer eventually like I will with Rosetta.

Today, I went over all the materials and created a chart of appointments and

retirements of French generals during World War One. That way I can see who had remained in a position to control the Attesor Project from 1914 to 1919. I intend to examine that along with the other materials tomorrow.

Now, the anniversary of my great-grandfather Jack McWild's death is coming up soon.

It was on the 25th that he was found below the bridge at the Place de la Concorde.

I have to make sure I don't forget that.

Maybe it's because I visited his home yesterday, but I feel like reading his writing. I plan to pull out his letter from the bottom of my travel bag and reread it before going to sleep.

That of course is not the letter he intended to send to Rose Francisca.

It's a letter for a French friend that was found along with some materials explaining a few things about the Attesor Project.

He never finished writing it, but it must be the final record that my great-grandfather left behind. My grandma gave me something that precious.

I'm going to read that before going to sleep. I might cry, though.

Jack McWild's Letter: To My Friend in a Distant Land

My friend. I haven't had anything worth writing to you about, so I thought I had lost any chance to speak with you.

But thank you for the letter each year for the past few years. Twenty years have passed since that cursed time and ten years have passed since everything got started anew, so perhaps our crimes are vanishing.

The two of us are the only ones who remember that project.

The survivors of that great war are gradually joining the dead and Beretta who I let you meet just that once (although she slept through most of it because she had worn herself out having fun) is now 16 and assisting a vigilante group by Write Bringing into a Heavy Barrel. When I see her fighting those Live Break monsters, I am sometimes reminded of you in the old days.

Now, I think it is about time I truly made up for my crimes. I think I will make up for that failure of a project that required us to erase so many people's memories and perhaps created great sorrow for so many people who are not even human.

I plan to meet a certain person in Paris and entirely erase the Attesor Project. I will make that project no more than a superstition.

Then I think I will visit you. And her as well.

Thank you for telling me she has taken over her parents' clinic.

Ten years ago, I was unable to tell her about that project and I was working so hard to clean up afterwards, but she mistakenly thought it was she who had done something wrong and we broke up.

At this point, I am glad that happened. That is why I must first truly make up for the Attesor Project. I will truly wipe the slate clean and attempt to redo everything.

I will visit you eventually. And when I do, I want to forget everything and free the last trace of the Attesor Project. And I will of course need your cooperation for that.

Then I will tell my daughter and the others-

March 24, 1944

Beretta's Journal



I am writing my entry in the library today. I've been eating lunch in the entrance a lot lately.

After eating an early lunch, I Pointed just for the hell of it and saw a German soldier walking past me.

<Even in morning, the elderly soldier is wearing a green military coat with the collar buttoned up. His limbs are prosthetic and produce quiet metallic sounds to reveal their mechanical nature.

He is heading to the reception desk with a leather bag full of materials.>

That was Heinz Berge. No doubt about it. He came here to investigate the Attesor Project.

To be honest, I'm writing this in the study room, but I'm a little worried he's going to show up behind me and arrest me. And when I was acting all defiant in yesterday's entry. After seeing him for myself, Phillip's warning felt a lot more convincing. Ugh.

I didn't Point at him for too long since I didn't want him to get suspicious, but I think his eyes were also prosthetic and he definitely had auditory devices near his ears. I can see why he's known as a Panzer Ritter.

I can't believe this. I never thought he would come here.

I mean, the Attesor Project honestly doesn't seem all that important. That Heinz guy didn't bring any men with him, so is he only looking into it as an individual?

What am I supposed to do about this? I think I'll write out my possibilities here:

1: Stop gathering materials and gradually put together an overall picture of the Attesor Project.

2: Gather even more materials and quickly put together the overall picture before summer.

Option 2 feels more like my style. But as Phillip said, the unexpected could happen. Option 1 would definitely be less nerve-racking.

I think I'll consider both options while making sure I can steer in either

direction once I make up my mind.

On that note, I had a small success in my compilation of historical documents today. I chose some candidates from the list of generals in the previous war I made last night and I narrowed it way down. The final answer is still only speculation, but I have to keep in mind what my great-grandfather's letter said:

<The two of us are the only ones who remember that project.

The survivors of that great war are gradually joining the dead.>

This general would have to have maintained their high status from 1914 to 1919 but died within 20 years of the war's end. And they needed to be powerful enough to build a lab in the mountains and have an entire unit perform research there for a 5 year period. That left only one option.

<General Auriol Severn who is descended from French nobility. (Died 1921)>

That famous general was praised for his courage by the entire French army and he continued commanding he troops until near the end of the war while hiding the fact that he was afflicted with Words Warn. People called him Your Excellency.

That's a pretty big name, but it has to have been him. I'm not quite sure whether I should go ahead and Sign that it was him, but I'll just have to use this as a clue for now. I've got to keep at it.

<The current time is 4:45 PM. The music box that indicates the library's closing time is playing.>

It's time I got home. Then I can mail Rosetta's letter...no, I can just carry it to the mansion.

Rosetta's Journal

I will write a journal entry today as well.

A lot of unusual things happened today. I first noticed that the smell of the wind was different from normal. So I tried to look back into my old memories. I tried to remember the wind. I wanted to remember when I had first been touched by the wind.

But I could not remember.

I am incomplete. And the master once said that an incomplete machine is not a good thing.

Recently there has been a large female machine known as a Lourd de Marionnette in the underground storeroom. Its arms and legs have been removed though. The master seems to want to see it move. I go look at the machine a lot. It was not created as a Belle de Marionnette and thus does not have a will of its own.

But it is a machine just like me. However. If you asked me which one of us was the better machine I would tell you I am. For some reason I feel a sense of relief when I look at it. It does not grow and evolve and it does not have a will of its own. However. It is complete like that.

I am incomplete.

I will rewrite these thoughts as a letter to Lady Berretta.

This evening Lady Beretta arrived by *bicyclette* and left after giving me a letter from her big bag. There was also a letter for the master.

She used her letter to invite me out. She said she wants to teach me how to cook.

She ended her letter by saying I should go outside soon.

Me. Outside. I can view the outside from the mansion's hill but that is only viewing it.

Lady Beretta is trying to do something different. She is trying to invite me out into that. I have of course been in the city before. Like for the night market. And when I send a letter I go to the *boîte aux lettres* in front of Boulogne Forest.

But I feel like this invitation is different. I do not know what to say. And I have realized something else as well. I want to go out. If I had to say why I would say because I can predict that something fun is sure to happen if I do as Lady Beretta says. There is so much more out there than in the garden.

The garden was once a place I only went to trim the grass.

Now the garden is a place that makes me feel so many different things.

Similarly the outside is currently a place that I only look at. But what will it be in the future? I do not know what will happen out there. But I want to go and find out.

The master went to the second floor so I rang the bell on the stairs to call for him.

When I appeared on the landing I looked up and told him I wanted to go outside with Lady Beretta.

For some reason his expression briefly changed. It was something other than a smile.

But he immediately gave me permission. Then he told me to come up to the second floor.

The second floor. I had never been there in my entire life. I thought my hearing was malfunctioning and asked him to repeat himself. But he had indeed told me to come up to the second floor.

I climbed the stairs for the very first time. I knew it was a series of small steps but it felt like having a wall in front of me once I actually set foot on it.

There are three steps down from the kitchen's back exit. But the stairs up to the mansion's second floor are three times my height. I climbed one step at a time. The stairs are small and I could not move my feet back or forth on them.

Once I had set my foot down, I had to step with the other foot without moving the first one.

I stumbled twice.

Once I had climbed them all the master praised me.

And he told me I would be working up there as well starting tomorrow.

I did not know what he meant by that but he is apparently having me clean the second floor hallway and some of the rooms. He has apparently been spending the last few days tidying up the second floor.

We walked down the second floor hallway and the master showed me the rooms I am to clean.

The study. The library. The antiques room. The storeroom. And the hall. They are all larger than the rooms on the first floor. They were also quiet dusty. Only the library was clean and I think that is because the master uses it a lot.

I will be cleaning those rooms starting tomorrow. The master made sure to watch from the landing until I had made it all the way down the stairs. I made sure to hold onto the railing next to the stairs on the way down. That is because it felt like my feet were descending before my body on the way down.

A lot happened today.

I have so much to write about and I am quickly using up the pages of my journal.

There is so much more to look forward to now. I am now going to wait for Lady Beretta. She first visited the mansion during the night so that could always happen again.

I am waiting. This is not part of my job. It is not my job and yet I am waiting.

Heinz Berge's Journal

At 03:22, I awoke earlier than planned. I believe I was woken by a shocking dream.

Ever since my Psyche Outer surgery, I have experienced no dreams. I cannot say whether this is a mistake in the surgery or if I had simply been forgetting them until now. I do not remember what this dream was about either.

The only thing that remains in my memory is a scream. I cannot determine what kind of scream or whose scream it is.

I cannot predict why I had a dream related to a scream. From there, I waited until dawn.

At 08:35, a contact officer from the army visited. The Kavalier damage from the training the day before yesterday was not fully repaired, so I agreed to begin the drills at 13:30.

At 10:45, I visited the city's central library. When I performed a Verbesserung on the way in, my left precise vision prosthetic eye detected the receptionist librarian receiving a hidden package along with a guest's books.

I left through the back entrance and tailed the guest.

At 11:18, I ordered the SS troops patrolling the city to tail the aforementioned guest. I then walked to the army intelligence division and ordered them to inspect the librarian's home. When they asked if I had any circumstantial evidence, I retrieved the data from my prosthetic eye in their 2nd science room.

At 12:10, I left the army intelligence division.

At 13:25, I began drills with the Panzer troops. I trained them all until they could pass 5 seconds in overdrive.

At 19:50, I returned to the barracks. A letter had been left for me saying the librarian and guest's homes had been located and a warrant would be put out

for their arrest within the day. There is a good possibility that librarian was a contact point for the Resistance.

At 20:21, I went to the army intelligence division and requested to view my own records from World War One and the combat records of the Army 111th Infantry Division 1st Grösse Panzer Platoon that I led. I was told I could search for documents and that I would receive a response in a week to a month after making a request.

At 21:08, I returned to the barracks. I read through the material on the Attesor Project. I suddenly recalled my dream from this morning and thought about it. I guessed that the scream I heard in my dream was related to this project in some way. If so, the awakening of my memories would be the key to solving the Attesor Project.

But one thing still eludes me: why am I pursuing the Attesor Project?

To confirm I am the strongest? Or to search for my past?

Memories related to combat in World War One are gradually resurfacing. I can clearly recall some battles such as the Seventh Fort or the Arstrasse. But I have yet to recover any of the memories of a visit to the Bourgogne region that I believe to be related to the Attesor Project. Is that because I did not visit that region at the time, or is something suppressing the recovery of those memories?

I concluded I could answer that question when I later received my combat records.

March 25, 1944

Heinz Berge's Journal: Entry 1

At 03:21, I awoke earlier than planned. I had that dream again.

A scream, flowers, the rainy streets of Berlin. Those memories remain independent of each other. Of course, these fragmentary memories are not deemed combat related and will eventually be erased by the prosthetic parts controlling my memories.

But I am not sure why I am recording that here. I should have no emotions, so why am I leaving a written record of these unnecessary fragments of memories?

Am I subconsciously predicting them to be a key to finding the Attesor Project?

Or have I realized that these memories are important to me?

What am I doing?

I only know the general concept of the Attesor Project and that it was carried out in the Bourgogne region. But I am gaining evidence of its existence from a few different sources.

I am attempting to be the strongest, so why am I looking into the French army's past? Is it part of that same goal, or am I seeking my lost memories? If I am to continue pursuing the Attesor Project, I must head to Bourgogne. And to do that, I must end this war.

I can predict I am recording this so I will know that.

It is currently 04:01. I will now go back to sleep.

Beretta's Journal

Today, I'm writing this on a bench at a corner of the Arc de Triomphe plaza. I don't really feel like heading home.

If I had to sum up today, I would say it was the day I learned of my naiveté.

First of all, the librarian is gone. I entered the library while Signing, greeted the librarian at the reception desk like always, and started to return the research materials I had borrowed. But then...

<The library director is standing at the reception desk with a surprised look on his face.

"She won't be returning here."

Sure enough, the usual librarian is nowhere to be seen.>

That's the scary thing about this city. I just Signed my assumptions and thought she was there. And when those assumptions didn't match reality, a Point threw that reality in my face.

According to the director, the Germans arrived that morning and stole every last one of her possessions and documents from the library. That meant she really had been part of the Resistance.

I stayed in the library for a bit after that, but I couldn't relax and decided to leave. I had given her a letter to send. What would happen if the Germans got their hands on that?

And what was it that led to her arrest? Was it Heinz Berge from yesterday?

My delivery may have ended up with the Germans and I'll find a soldier in front of my room when I go home. No, it might not be today. It could be tomorrow too. I was questioned as a female Knight Striker before, but Mallette and the others saved me by faking an alibi for me. But there would be no escape this time. I mean, they would have actual evidence that I had a

connection to the Resistance.

I can't believe this. Since I'm an outsider in this world, I'll just disappear if I die.

Anyone with even the slightest connection to the Resistance is "welcomed" as a prisoner of war at one of the concentration camps in Germany. And they never come back.

What am I supposed to do now? Because I had been Signing as I walked to think about all this, I had apparently ended up with a discrepancy from "reality". When I Pointed to prove how calm I was, I found the shoulder of my shawl was a little torn. It may have caught on something while I walked.

So what do I do now? It wasn't like me to be too afraid to even approach my *appartement*. But today I was reminded what it meant to be "like me".

I really am a coward and ignorant of the world.

My mind had been on the Germans all day. Even when I threw a bouquet of flowers into the river for Jack McWild and when I met with Rosetta to tell her I would be picking her up tomorrow.

Phillip was right. Maybe I should lie low for a while.

Before, I Write Bringed into a Heavy Barrel and five people died. And today something had happened to someone else. Today couldn't have been entirely my fault, but it's still true the people around me are disappearing.

Why can't I protect the people around me? Aren't I supposed to be a Knight Striker?

<The Arc de Triomphe plaza clock says it is 8:32 PM.>

Oh, no. The Germans begin their night patrols at 9. I'll be questioned if I'm still out then.

I need to get home, but I'm afraid to.

Why does Phillip have to be with the Germans at a time like this? I could have gone and asked to say in his stable.

But, well, I might not be arrested. If I keep Signing, I'll just depress myself

further. I need to make sure to Point on my way back.

I might not be able to sleep tonight. I should probably use this as a chance to write some letters. Those could act as my will. And if I survive to tomorrow, I can pick up Rosetta, have a cooking get-together with everyone, and just have a good time. Once that's over, I'll have one less regret even if I am arrested.

It's time to get home. Going there and getting arrested would feel a little better than staying out and being arrested after a random questioning.

Guilliaum's Journal

Today's Events.

1: The High Priestess was Arrested

A young woman known as the High Priestess worked at the library and acted as our contact with those outside the country, but she was raided and died last night. Late at night, the SS visited her *appartement*, so she told them to wait until she was presentable, returned to her room, and slit her own throat with a knife.

Only the letters and packages for the 24th were found in her room and the arrest of the senders has begun. The deliveries for the 23rd have yet to be found, but it is unknown if that is simply because they have not been found or because they were already sent out on the Resistance's delivery route. That is under investigation.

Old "Blue-Eyes" has said to use another High Priestess as a contact point. Personally, I do not understand why the young ones tend to choose death like that.

2: Paris Liberation Planning Meeting

Old "Blue-Eyes" and I discussed what plans could realistically be carried out. We primarily want a definite method of reaching liberation using only the Resistance inside Paris. This was only our first meeting, but we came up with quite a few plans. Of the 1500 Resistance members in Paris, only about 300 are capable of serious combat. And while there are a variety of usable weapons, the primary weapons at our disposal are cars and Appareils. We are putting together plans that use those.

Old "Blue-Eyes" is the most excited about it and he even said other cities could follow our example and liberate themselves if we did liberate Paris with only the Resistance here. That would indeed be ideal.

3: Anniversary of Jack McWild's Death.

In the afternoon I brought a bottle of wine to the Place de la Concorde bridge where his body was found floating. I met Old "Blue-Eyes" there. He does not know that Jack McWild and I shared that abominable Attesor Project together. While discussing old times, I made an Ajouter near the bridge and saw that girl there.

She threw a bouquet into the river and left. She did not Ajouter at all. She was entirely inwardly focused.

Old "Blue-Eyes" tried to call out and ask who the flowers were for, but I stopped him. We poured the wine into the river and then went our own ways. Once I returned home, Rosetta was in a good mood, the girl was there, and she left after hearing Rosetta's answer.

That sums up today.

Heinz Berge's Journal: Entry 2

I was off duty today.

At 10:02, I was visited by an SS contact officer. He informed me that the librarian from yesterday was arrested, that the Resistance had used her to communicate with those outside the country, that most of the deliveries had already been sent out two days ago, and that we would have had much better results had she been arrested two days earlier. He then thanked me and left.

At 12:32, I searched the materials at the central library. I passed by a woman at the entrance. Her shoulder bumped into me, her sleeve tore, and her coat's shoulder belt snapped, but she continued walking without noticing. I recalled the meaning of Lernen and Verbesserung.

At 16:28, I left. I visited the army intelligence division and searched through the past records. I tried to view my combat records from the previous world war, but the search assistant said most of the records from that time had been destroyed due to the Treaty of Versailles and the surviving ones would require approval from the archive back at headquarters. I had the search assistant send a request to the headquarters archive. When the form asked for the purpose of my request, I said it was for my personal investigation of the French Army's project to develop the strongest Kavalier.

At 18:33, I returned to the barracks and read through the day's materials.

In the process, I recalled the names of all the French generals back then. Our army unit would have been fighting battles to strike back against that brave Auriol Severn.

It is still unclear what exactly the Attesor Project was, but I am gathering more evidence that it did exist.

I began remaking my whole body for the Panzer Ritter Project after the Treaty of Versailles. The closer my body became to being a machine, the more

efficiently I could Schreiben with a Grösse Panzer and the higher my reaction speed, the greatest weakness of a Kavalier, grew. That should be obvious because it becomes a machine rather than a person combining with the Kavalier. When a normal person Schreibens, the Kavalier attempts to match their human parts and they cannot draw out the Kavalier's full ability.

I am attempting to be the strongest, so why am I looking into the French army's past? Is it part of that same goal, or am I seeking my lost memories? As the Psyche Outer surgery took away both my emotions and my memories, I have no emotions to feel about this.

At 22:35, I finished reading the research materials. As I tidied up my things, I discovered a photograph. I felt like I had seen it before, but I could not find any memory of it. It was a photograph of a woman and a girl smiling in front of some flowers. I could not remember who they are or the name of the flowers behind them.

I also read back over the first entry from this morning, but I could make no sense of it.

Looking at the previous records showed that I had dreamed of a scream yesterday too. The rest is unclear. But based on the text, "flowers" and "the rainy streets of Berlin" had also been important.

<What am I doing?>

That question was unnecessary for combat. I can predict these thoughts come from a failing of the surgery, but I have none of those excess thoughts now. The Psyche Outer surgery was meant to improve my combat ability.

I have no past as a human or any hesitation. I have no surprise or doubts about that, so I will simply Lernen the things in the back of my mind and go to sleep.

Chapter 6: Happiness



第六章

「嬉」

1944・03・26
～03・27

曲がり角を曲がるたびに
自転車は
石畳で跳ねました——。

03/26/1944 - 03/27/1944

Every time we turned a corner the bicyclette bounced along the stone pavement

March 26, 1944

German General Headquarters Telegram: To Paris Branch

Urgent.

Investigation here in Germany has confirmed that the Attesor Project was carried out within France. The rest is counting on the continued investigation at your branch. These detailed documents concerning the Attesor Project are to be given to Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge who is thought to be the closest to the investigation. Authority on the matter will later be given to the Lieutenant Colonel, so follow his instructions. We look forward to seeing the results.

Beretta's Journal: Today's First Entry

Today is probably going to be a long day and I could be arrested at any time, so I'm writing this first entry during the day. I am currently near my *appartement*. I'm writing this while sitting on the railing of the Place de la Concorde bridge.

People tend to only Sign while walking, so no one sees me sitting on the railing.

This is best when I want to be alone.

Now, Rosetta came to my room today. Right now, she should be preparing the ingredients that Mallette and the others bought. Most of the plates in my room were "unusable", so I left to do some shopping while also gathering my thoughts.

I want to think seriously about what to do next if I'm not arrested in the next few days.

1. Search for Rose Francisca's House

The thought occurred to me while I was out shopping. Part of the reason I came to Paris was to search for that. Before I'm arrested, I want to give her the letter my grandma left with me.

2. Should I participate in the Heavy Barrel battle at the school festival?

If Phillip is right, participating would be very dangerous. The Germans will almost certainly use their special slot to send in someone quite skilled. I would be at risk if I participated and fought back. But someone else will be at risk if I don't participate. Protecting people is a Knight Striker's job, so I have to participate.

But to be honest, I'm scared. The events of the last few days have left me a little off balance.

I need to give both those issue serious thought. Even without the Attesor Project, I'm pretty busy, aren't I?

Come to think of it, that Heavy Barrel practice is this afternoon.

It's voluntary and I don't plan to participate, but I am curious about it.

<The sun in the sky has shifted somewhat west of its peak and there are somewhat fewer people on the streets.

It is midday. Lunchtime.>

It's this late already? We're going to spend the afternoon on our cooking battle, so I need to get focused and get back there.

Rosetta is waiting. I wonder what she would do.

If I was arrested and couldn't see her anymore, would she still want to be human?

Rosetta's Journal: Today's First Entry

I am writing an entry today as well.

I normally write my journal entries at home. But today I am visiting Lady Beretta's home and a lot has happened. So I am using the time until the food is ready to write some of it now.

I am writing this on some paper Lady Beretta gave me because she was not going to use it.

Lady Beretta is in Lady Mallette's room next door to clean up for everyone to eat together.

I am using Lady Beretta's room to write this. It is a strange room. It is smaller than any room I am familiar with and yet it has so many things inside it. A *bicyclette* tire. A bag. A parasol. A few folding chairs. Books. A toolbox. And a pendulum clock on the floor. I can see no rhyme or reason to where or how things are stored.

But I digress. I need to write about the day's events. Lady Beretta arrived in the morning today.

I had known I would see her at 10 because we had agreed to it the evening before. She was carrying a larger bag than normal. I was curious and asked what was inside.

She said she has too many secrets and thus needs to carry them all around with her. She then suggested we get going. I felt like I was forgetting some things and could ask more questions. But I did as she said.

It was my first time to ride a *bicyclette*. Lady Beretta was driving it. I was further luggage on top of the large bag she had tied to the luggage rack.

She said I did not need to worry because she would drive safely.

We then rode down the hill in front of the mansion. We moved really fast.

The ground at the bottom of the hill approached rapidly and the wind was strong. The only way to support myself was to hold tightly to Lady Beretta's hips. I shut my eyes and cried out without meaning to.

I felt myself shaking and realized we had already left the mansion's gate and entered Boulogne Forest.

We were moving so fast. I think Lady Beretta said something. But it did not register with me.

I was too surprised by the way the scenery rushed by and the wind hit me.

We soon left the forest and passed by the *boîte aux lettres* I use to send out letters.

The mechanical beating of the heart created inside me by the Coppelias Effect was racing.

Then we were in the city.

It was the first time I focused on and saw the bright daytime city.

There were young men. There were young women.

There were young boys. There were young girls.

There were old men. There were old women.

There were cars. There were carriages.

There were unlit streetlights. There were trees growing in rows alongside the roads.

There were houses far smaller than the mansion. There were *appartements* as tall as the mansion.

There were colorful signs. There were old metal signs.

The things I wanted to see passed me by with the wind. We were moving so fast. That speed was probably the speed with which Lady Beretta experiences the city.

I called her name. But she did not turn around. She seemed to be thinking about something. She seemed to be rushing through the city like she was trying to run away from something.

Every time we turned a corner the *bicyclette* bounced along the stone pavement. It worried me how the end of my hair occasionally brushed against the road.

I eventually realized my pulse had settled down and sensed that I was clinging to Lady Beretta.

I looked around again and realized I really was in the city. I was contained inside the city.

It had seemed so special when viewing it from afar. But it had accepted me inside so easily. Perhaps that was because Lady Beretta had entered the city so quickly. I think I would have hesitated or been overwhelmed if I had been walking like normal.

Lady Beretta stopped the *bicyclette* after about five minutes. I got off and then tripped.

My mechanical legs were trembling. Lady Beretta helped me up.

Lady Beretta said I must have been nervous and that it might be better if my legs were modeled after human ones just like my arms.

I do not know if that would be better. But Lady Beretta must know what she is talking about since she is from a family of Belle de Marionnette engineers.

We had arrived at an *appartement*. We entered through the side entrance and climbed the stairs.

It was a narrow stairway. We climbed four times as many steps as the mansion's stairs and arrived at a hallway that reminded me of a dark and narrow shed.

The second door was Lady Beretta's room. Three of her friends were in the neighboring room. They were all women her age who she knew from school.

That was my first time facing so many people at once. They all introduced themselves and I gave a greeting back. The one named Mallette was the owner of that neighboring room and seemed to be their leader.

They all asked me many things.

Where do you live? How old are you? Where were you born?

I politely answered as best I could. Then they asked me one final question.

Are you really a Belle de Marionnette?

Lady Beretta answered before I could.

She asked Lady Mallette if she was really Jewish.

Lady Mallette seemed to understand something from that. She smiled bitterly and took my hand. I remember my heart beating extra hard from that sudden action. I could feel the warmth of her hand as she spoke to me.

She said they wanted me to be part of their group. But she said they could only do that if I swore to use an ability of mine for them.

Lady Beretta smiled and commented how hard it is for a group of women to live together.

I sort of understand what she meant. I use artificial arms and legs to make up for the ability I lack for my life in the mansion. I doubt I could have maintained the mansion so well if I was human.

I then began cooking as I had promised. That led to a commotion.

The room was too small to teach everyone to cook. So Lady Mallette had us use her room and the two neighboring rooms for the kitchen. That way we could cook three different dishes in parallel.

One was the *plat de résistance* that I primarily made.

One was the *hors d'oeuvre* that I only gave instructions for and did not spend any time on.

And one was the *dessert* that could be made in advance and allowed to sit.

We spent about an hour discussing before coming to a decision.

We agreed on *escargot* cooked in *vin rouge* and a whole cooked *poulet* for the *plat de résistance*. They both only needed to be cooked in the oven. They took some time to prepare but left you free to do other things while they cooked. The rooms were not installed with ovens and we had to use the one Lady Mallette had brought in for herself. We considered but rejected *cervelle de veau* because one of them found it unappetizing.

We wanted something we could all grab and eat for the *hors d'oeuvre* and we all agreed on *oignon frit* with *saupiquet* sauce. We also put out some *pâté d'alouette* for anyone who wanted it.

We already had the *oignon frit* and so we chose an onion *gratin* for the soup.

We chose cooking *pain d'épices* with lots of honey in it for dessert. Sprinkling sugar on it and buying some cream would allow us to eat it *kouglof*-style.

We decided on all that and began working at 1 PM. We finished not long ago at 6 PM. It is now in the oven waiting for tonight.

I started thinking about a difficult subject.

That subject is blood.

When preparing a *poulet* for cooking I remove all the red liquid remaining inside. But I only recently realized this is called blood. After the dinner on March 11 I was rereading a cookbook in the mansion and came across a reference to blood removal. I only realized its meaning once I compared that description to my usual cooking method.

The blood that comes out of a *poulet's* body is almost identical to what I saw flowing from Lady Beretta's thigh when we first met.

If too much of that flows out then you die. You break.

My heart has become the same as a human's after evolving through the Coppelias Effect. Would I bleed if my body was cut open with a knife? I felt like trying it to find out. But I decided against it.

Lady Beretta had looked in pain when she was bleeding.

I decided it probably was not a good thing and I continued cooking.

But there is a large difference between cooking on my own and having other people cook. The two biggest incidents were when one of them bought small snails thinking they were *escargot* and when some oil caught fire in Lady Beretta's room.

When I look up now I can see a scorch mark on the ceiling. Signing too much would only cause the damage to expand so I will stop. I will just say it did not burn through the ceiling.

<The alarm clock left on the bed says it is 7:08 PM.

It is growing dark outside the window.>

I should probably get the plates ready soon.

Guilliaum's Letter: To a Far Distant Friend

Friend, I have not had much to tell you recently and felt like I had lost any opportunity to speak with you.

For now, I will tell you what I had for lunch and dinner today:

- *Pain de campagne*
- Water

When did I become a prisoner in the Bastille!?

To be clear, I am the master of this mansion. Three cheers for independence, and all that. Although I was out having a meeting with Old "Blue-Eyes" and the others. I still can't believe it. One of our contacts is dead and we're working to discover where the deliveries we left with her have gone. Were they already on their way out of the country or not? The Resistance does not have many other connections, so it isn't easy to research this kind of thing.

Rose Francisca isn't saying anything and I still don't know the identity of that girl, so I'm feeling a little blue.

I did recently send another letter to Rose Francisca, addressing it to the Prophetess. There is so much I want to ask her.

But I get the feeling Rosetta isn't going to return. In my experience, women never return at times like this. Oh, hell. How am I supposed to scold her if she returns in the morning tomorrow? Come to think of it, this might be the first time I've ever scolded her.

Until we speak again.

Beretta's Journal: Today's Second Entry

After we finished eating, an incident occurred. And now I'm writing this entry while everyone reviews for classes next week while being oddly considerate of my feelings.

I can't believe this. Three of our classmate boys stopped by earlier. And Phillip was one of them. Probably to put us at ease, he was wearing casual clothes instead of his German uniform, but as soon as he got here and saw Rosetta, he said something rude. I gave him a good kick on reflex and he quieted down a fair bit after that.

But the incident was what happened later.

To put it simply, one of our friends ran in while we were eating and said someone was injured during the Practical Heavy Barrel lesson. I silently Pointed to listen to what she said.

<She was also taking the Practical Heavy Barrel class and she had seen it happen.

During today's lesson, the German instructor's Heavy Barrel had completely smashed both arms and legs of the Heavy Barrel an essentially amateur boy had Write Bringed into. The instructor's Heavy Barrel had looked to the spectator seats and clearly looked disappointment when he realized no one was there to witness it.

She had gotten in the ambulance carrying the injured boy and visited the hospital with the professor.

He had received emergency Tune healing, but a complete recovery had seemed unlikely.> When Phillip heard, he spoke up, probably because he was sitting next to me.

"And you want Beretta to take revenge? Don't be ridiculous."

That pissed me off, so I snapped back at him. I asked him what he meant by "ridiculous" and told him this was my issue and he could butt out. After some arguing, Phillip left, the friend who had just arrived took his seat in his place, and a horribly quiet dinner followed. Mallette tried to cheer everyone up, but I just didn't have it in me. Sorry.

But I did manage to hold back from saying something I knew I shouldn't:

"Then why don't you quit the Resistance?"

It's because he's in the Resistance that Phillip Missel is killed on August 1 when the Expert de Épée, the Heavy Barrel he was Write Bringing into, is sliced in two. If he's going to criticize what I'm doing, it makes me want to return the favor. Not that I can actually say it.

But during the fuss, Rosetta alone watched with great interest as Phillip and I fought.

When I realized it must look comical and that this was probably the first time she had seen anything like it, I started feeling silly and managed to calm down.

We finished eating and Rosetta is now washing dishes in the next room. I thought I would help, but then I realized I would probably just break them. I was worried about Rosetta getting home too late, so Mallette sent a telegram to the old man's mansion. According to Mallette the bourgeois...

"By the Balleroy family, do you mean that famous Paris family!? The Royal Chevalier for the entire country, compared to the Missel family which is only the Chevalier de Paris!?"

Rosetta did not know and the documents I had on hand weren't enough to tell me.

Mallette said the Royal Chevalier of the Balleroy family had been in charge of all of France's knights until the 19th century. Then the Balleroy family had fallen and disappeared, so Chevaliers for each region had fortified their own lands. And those Chevaliers had lost any purpose after the revolution.

Phillip's Missel family was the former Chevalier de Paris family. They still had influence in Paris politics and the neighboring lands, but apparently only the Balleroy family would have the authority to give them orders.

I had to wonder why someone so important was not found in any of the records in '98.

Then again, that old man didn't seem so important and Rosetta didn't seem to understand any of it.

"Is that who my master is? If so, he must be starving today, but what should I do?"

Mallette tilted her head at that. Rosetta's carefree attitude had helped clear my mood a little. She may have had a way of reflecting people's emotions. Thanks to that, I was feeling more carefree and managed to make a decision about one of the things I had been worrying about during the day.

I will participate in the school festival's Heavy Barrel battle.

Not because of my stance on Knight Strikers, but because I have to. It's my responsibility.

The German instructor had definitely used that boy as a message to me. Who knows what will happen if I don't announce my participation. There are a lot of German instructors and observers in the school.

I already had a connection with the Germans thanks to the letter I had sent out of the country and the Attesor Project, but this is different. This isn't them pursuing me. I have to fight.

So I will fight.

Protecting people is Knight Striker's job, but a few people have already been hurt because of me. It isn't fair to Phillip who was worried enough to argue over it, but this is something I can't run away from.

But once this is over, I really will stop with all the dangerous stuff. I'll use this battle to determine whether or not I can remain a Knight Striker.

I know what I have to do:

1. Search out the house of my great-grandmother, Rose Francisca, and participate in the Heavy Barrel battle.

2. Once the battle is over, use the information I have gathered to come up with a general summary of the Attesor Project.

3. Once I know the basics of the Attesor Project, go see Rose Francisca, give her Jack McWild's letter, and search through the Bourgogne region to see if the Attesor Project was really done there.

That should about cover it.

Heinz Berge won't be able to ditch his military duties to visit the Bourgogne region.

As long as I'm not arrested, that should work.

<A plate is heard breaking in the next room.

Mallette looks up from the notes she was reviewing.>

So even Rosetta breaks plates, huh? I should probably go check on her.

And I'll ask her if she wants to be human or not. I don't know if I can be a Knight Striker, but I will still Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel. So what about Rosetta?

I'm sure this will be the last entry for today.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's Second Entry

I will write the rest now.

A lot happened during the meal. But I cannot write what I do not understand.

A few gentlemen arrived. Two at first and then another. The third one wore blue. He was tall and wore an earring of a sword emblem. He said his name is Phillip. He seemed close to Lady Beretta. As soon as Sir Phillip arrived he looked to me while I worked.

That surprised me a little. He must use his Ajouter quite well to notice someone he has never met as soon as he enters the room. He seems to have been doing it while he walked.

He seemed to look down on me and asked what a Belle de Marionnette was doing here.

Lady Beretta immediately hit him with a powerful kick.

<He flew over and crashed into the door. The door fell off.>

Lady Beretta walked past me and grabbed Sir Phillip by the collar. She asked him if there was anything wrong with me being here.

They argued for a bit. But Sir Phillip picked up the door and apologized to me.

I remembered what Lady Beretta had said to me in the mansion storeroom before. She had said I am not human but it would be rude to not treat me like one. I remembered that right of mine that I was not aware of. The emotion I felt during the dinner on March 11 must have been proof of that right. I also think it is the driving force that led me to want to leave and come here.

I said I am aware of what I am and told Sir Phillip not to worry about it.

I smiled a little as I said it. I do not know why. There must have been a reason. I did not smile because I tried to. It was like water pouring out of a tilted

pitcher. The small smile simply came out on its own. I do not understand. But I thought that was for the best.

The dinner soon began and Sir Phillip and Lady Beretta sat next to each other. Lady Beretta was smiling and seemed to be in a good mood. But things changed when a girl entered partway through the meal. I did not really understand. But it seems an organization that Sir Phillip belongs to hurt one of Lady Beretta's friends. And for some reason discussion turned to whether or not Lady Beretta would take responsibility for this.

Sir Phillip and Lady Beretta got into another argument. I could only interpret it as Sir Phillip protecting Lady Beretta by saying she did not need to take responsibility and Lady Beretta asking Sir Phillip not to worry about her. They were both thinking about each other. So why did Sir Phillip get up and leave? I do not understand.

Lady Beretta in particular kept looking like she wanted to say something but falling silent. That is not like her.

Everyone began preparing to leave once the dinner was complete and we had cleaned up some.

I was wondering what to do and Lady Mallette said she had sent a telegram to the master asking for permission for me to spend the night. I had not expected to spend the night outside the mansion for the first time.

I began a more serious cleanup after that. My hand slipped for some reason and I broke two plates. I have never made a mistake like that before. Lady Beretta returned from the neighboring room while I was cleaning it up.

I reported only to Lady Beretta that I had broken the plates. She sees me as a human and I was afraid this would make her think of me as an awkward Belle de Marionnette. But she had the opposite reaction. She shrugged and looked at me before sighing and laughing a little.

She said I had a way of calming people's moods and she said there was an extremely simple reason for my mistake. She asked if I was happy that I would be spending the night and told me to think carefully about it.

So I thought about whether or not I was happy.

I realized I could not describe to Lady Beretta what the emotion of happiness is.

I do not know what to tell her. Is this happiness or not? If I say yes I will have to define happiness as the emotion inside me now.

Can I define it that way or not? This emotion might be stronger or weaker than what Lady Beretta calls happiness.

I thought about it.

If what I am feeling is stronger than what Lady Beretta is thinking of then I would be unable to use happiness to describe what she calls happiness.

If what I am feeling is weaker than what Lady Beretta is thinking of then Lady Beretta will think I am acting happy over trivial things.

I thought about whether or not the feeling inside me was at just the right level.

I looked away from Lady Beretta as she looked at me.

I do not know why. But I felt like I would be able to quickly gather my thoughts if I did so.

I faced the other way. There was a window there. I could see the city night. It was very dark. But I also saw many lights there. Those lights took the form of boxy windows and round lamps. They were lined up and scattered horizontally and vertically both in the distance and close by. It created a different city from the one I had seen during the day.

That reminded me that I was outside. I was not inside the mansion. It reminded me I was in an unfamiliar place. I lost responsibility and control of my mouth and it moved on its own.

I replied that I was happy.

I do not remember what I said after that. I think I said lots of things to Lady Beretta. I probably made her listen until I was satisfied. I came back to my sense to find she was smiling.

She said that was good. She said I could break as many plates as I wanted if it that was what made me break them.

She said that the Belle de Marionnette race does not make any mistakes at first.

We do not grow and learn to not make mistakes. We grow and find more things to worry or think about. And that causes us to make more mistakes. Only after that do we grow and learn to not make those mistakes. Afterwards Lady Beretta looked me in the eye and asked a question.

She asked if I was afraid to make mistakes.

I said that I did not like making mistakes but that I was not afraid to.

She nodded and smiled at my answer. She finally smiled again.

She kept saying that was good and then Lady Mallette walked in.

"You're in a better mood now. The water is about ready."

This *appartement* apparently uses a shower instead of a bathtub. They said they will generally activate the hot water heater and then each take a shower in turn. The bath area is apparently very small and that makes it hard to get one person out and another in.

Lady Beretta then looked to my feet and asked if my artificial legs are waterproofed.

I told her my legs are waterproofed to everyday standards and that my arms are too as they are human-style. She immediately told Lady Mallette to prepare a change of clothes for me.

It seems I too need to wash my body. This will actually be the first time for me to use a real shower. I only use the shower at the mansion for cold water. And I only ever heat the water for washing my hair. I wash my body by soaking a cloth in hot water and wiping it down.

The master seems to soak in the tub. But I have never done it. Because I once tried to copy him and my right leg hit the heater and knocked it off.

I wonder what it feels like to wash your body in a warm water shower.

The resident of the other room neighboring Lady Mallette's has just entered the shower. That means I am next.

A lot has happened today. And this kind of day makes me happy.

It seems being able to write about a lot is related to the emotion of happiness. I think the days that have given me a lot to write about have had a lot of happy things happen in them.

This emotion is not part of my job. It seems there is a lot I can do outside of my work.

P.S.

Before taking a shower I plan to ask Lady Beretta how to use quotation marks. I hope to have a few things to quote once I am confident how they work.

Heinz Berge's Journal

I was off duty today. Nothing of much note happened.

At 10:00, the headquarters requested I come in. Once I arrived, a commander from the General Headquarters Geheimnis Agency asked a few questions about the Attesor Project I am currently investigating on an individual level.

According to that young officer, they plan to place me as the head of an Attesor Project Investigation Team. But he also handed me the documents that had been sealed inside the general headquarters archive.

At 16:21, I read through those documents. I am currently thinking about them.

Earlier, a bookmark fell out of the papers I was searching through. I have concluded it belonged to whoever was viewing these before me. The bookmark had a pressed flower pasted to it.

It is a four o'clock flower. Why is the name of that flower in my memories? Along with that faded appearance?

It was the same as the flowers growing behind the woman and girl in that photo I found in my things the other day.

The four o'clock flower is known as the belle-de-nuit in French. Similarly, they refer to a Sein Frau as a Belle de Marionnette and a Grösse Panzer as a Lourd de Marionnette.

Even after multiple surgeries so I might devote my life to Grösse Panzers, some fragments of my memories seem to linger and occasionally float to the surface. I feel no surprise or doubt about this. I will simply Lernen these thoughts in the back of my mind and go to sleep.

I placed the bookmark in my jacket's pocket. If that memory remains, I plan to return it to the intelligence division.

March 27, 1944

Letter Left by Mallette: To My Hungover Friend Beretta

I imagine it will be midday by the time you read this, you sleepyhead. It seems our roles are reversed today. We kept the party going a bit after showering last night, but, Beretta, it's been a while since you drank, so you need to restrain yourself more. You passed out and Miss Rosetta had to put you to bed.

And I just peeked in at you two and you're sleeping in the same bed like sisters. I see your habit of holding onto things in your sleep hasn't gone away. You had your arms around her tight, so I'll have to ask who woke up first and how you explained that one.

I took a photo, so let's get that developed later and show it off.

Oh, right. Speaking of photos, I also took one of Miss Rosetta when she was showering last night. Y'know, since that's a ritual for anyone who joins our merry band, officially or unofficially. Anyway, it turns out her skin is really pretty. I'm honestly jealous. You know how much I love beautiful things, so I couldn't help but sneak up behind her and touch it. Yes, two nice handfuls. That's gotta be why she was acting so cautious around me when we were drinking afterwards. Explain this to her later on for me, okay? Tell her I love pretty things, but I'm not interested in women.

But why does a Belle de Marionnette have bigger boobs than me? Could a Belle de Marionnette professor like you explain that one to me? I'm jealous of that too. She's even more "ideal" than us, but she hasn't noticed. A beautiful woman with no pride in her appearance should be illegal.

I kind of understand what you were talking about before. In America, Belle de

Marionnettes are treated worse than slaves as a kind of distraction from racial discrimination. And since your family makes them, you want to treat them like humans. I think I understand how you feel now. At least a little bit.

That smile when she replied to Phillip's apology last night and that surprise when I groped her from behind in the shower were both emotions I can't imagine from a mere machine.

Oh, I've written a lot that really isn't like me.

Make sure you don't let her see this letter, okay? I don't want her thinking I'm always going around praising people. But do tell her I'm glad we could accept someone like her as a part of our group.

Well, I need to get to class. I'll be borrowing your *bicyclette*, by the way. You take your time seeing her home by foot.

Sorbonne University Student Message Board:

Notification for All Students

This year's End-of-Term School Festival will be held on May 11, 12, and 13.

All clubs and seminars that wish to hold an exhibit or run a stand must submit a request to the Festival Committee by April 15. The programs will be announced on April 24, but any program participants will be informed beforehand. Please respond by April 15.

-Sorbonne University General Festival Committee

Sorbonne University Student Message Board: Notification for Those Enrolled in “Theory of Industrial Markets”

Lecture 3-IS, Industrial Markets, is canceled for the day because Professor Raven Ferris has been hospitalized with back pain. The following homework has been assigned, so enrolled students must submit the assignment by the end of class on April 9.

Assignment: Based on p72-218 of the text, write up your thoughts on the relationship between the Lourd de Marionnette and Belle de Marionnette markets.

-Sorbonne University Student Division

Theory of Industrial Markets Textbook: Chapter 2

Section 3

3

The most defining trait of the Lourd de Marionnette (LdM) industrial market is that it requires only the smallest possible market while simultaneously requiring the greatest possible technology. They are humanoid machines. And in addition to LdMs, there are Forma de Marionnettes (FdM) and Léger de Marionnettes (LédM). And each classification has a market for the military, security agencies, and similar organizations. But most of the costs for LdM come from maintenance fees, the necessary secrecy, and the secret deals that have long been the tradition.

We must consider the technology markets for all humanoid machines such as LdM. Humanoid machines generally require 7 technologies:

- 1: A Formule conversion device that makes the Recréa possible.**
- 2: The sensory devices that supply the LdM's abilities.**
- 3: The internal combustion engine that powers the LdM.**
- 4: The joint systems that control that power.**
- 5: The armor and armored clothing that creates the LdM's outer shell.**
- 6: The resistance emblem technology that prevents moonlight from sending them out of control.**
- 7: The Excède Emblème that acts as the symbol of the LdM.**

These technologies are first tested out on LdM and not FdM or LédM. That is because LdM are the most recognizable symbol of ground battles and the latest and greatest technology must be used to prevent those symbols from being defeated.

This is supported by the efforts of the LdM craftsmen and the cooperation of the military.

So even in this age of mass production, there are never 10 of the exact same model and the constructing it all from parts handmade by craftsmen keeps costs high. Of course, this makes their precision and movement vastly superior to the mass-produced FdMs and LédMs, so even the relatively-small older-style LdMs can overwhelm a cutting-edge and heavily-equipped FdM.

You could even say that the mass-production of FdMs and LédMs is meant to make up for that gap in ability.

An inferior reproduction of LdM technology is inherited by them, but that allows for the discovery of new problems, leading to further evolution.

The existence of LdMs has been confirmed before even the prehistorical Obstacle Era. The FdMs and LédMs we are familiar with now also existed since that time and they have evolved in many ways leading to the present.

The recent examples of progress would be the Formule conversation device installed in the back being reduced in size, the backpack doubling as a copilot seat, and that copilot seat being developed into a gun platform.

And as the current age will bring a demand for even greater ability, the various joints and motors will likely evolve as well. But it cannot be denied that male LdMs have become more common due to the excess weight of the bind cylinder and composite cylinder joints. I have heard America is developing curved cylinder joint technology to overcome that, but they have yet to announce anything as they only have a theory with no complete successes.

But even though LdMs continue to evolve like that, their numbers were drastically reduced by World War One.

That is obviously due to the rise of tanks and airplanes. Becoming a Lourd de Écrivain is hard, but tanks and airplanes are much easier to control and can be mass-produced. Germany had superb design and technology for tanks and airplanes during that war, so in addition to developing those same weapons, the Allies are said to have proposed various plans to increase the mobility and attack power of FdMs.

Those plans include the Amblin Project and the Premier Project which determined the style of later FdMs, but there are also some that have only left behind a name and may not have even existed, such as the Attensor Project.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 10:30, I began Panzer training at the training grounds.

With a break in the middle, we finished at 16:00. For discipline purposes, I then spoke with the soldier who had badly injured a student at Sorbonne University yesterday. When asked why, he mentioned a female Panzer Kavalier at the university, but I warned him that such trivial matters are nothing that a Panzer Kavalier should harm a civilian over.

At 20:27, I visited the training ground hangar to inspect my Grösse Panzer, Rot Löwe.

A single Grösse Panzer was active in the simple maintenance area behind the hangar. I had never seen the Panzer before, but the sword emblem on the shoulders told me it was Expert de Épée of the Missel family. The workers watching on told me that Phillip Missel had been here since last night. He had brought out his Panzer, released the power limiter, and began repairing it.

"But he had told us he had decided to never again Recréa into a Lourd de Marionnette again after what happened ten years ago. He apparently smashed up his grandfather's leg during training and the man could never walk properly again."

That was what a Paris-born worker told me.

If he had indeed not Schreiben-ed into that Grösse Panzer in ten years and it had also just been repaired, then he must have significant skill as a Panzer Kavalier. A few times, the tip of his sword produced a supersonic wave. I doubt any of the troops stationed here would stand a chance against him. I also decided he would continue practicing within the Expert de Épée for quite some time. So at 21:32, I returned to the barracks. At almost the same time, a contact officer from HQ visited. I was handed a sealed envelope from Sorbonne University. It contained a request to choose two Panzer Kavaliere to participate

in the school festival's Grösse Panzer battle.

I gave an immediate reply. Sending myself and Phillip Missel would solve everything. At the very least, we would not bring shame on the name of the Panzer Kavalier by injuring a civilian and we would also win an easy victory.

I will now continue reading through the Attesor Project documents and then go to sleep.

Chapter 7: Outside



第七章

「外」

1944・04・20

私は彼らが巣穴の方の
斜面に姿を消すまで
見送りました——。

04/20/1944

I watched them until they vanished into their den on the slope.

April 20, 1944

**The Prophetess's Letter: To the Former Royal Chevalier
Guilliaum**

Excuse me for using a pseudonym once more. This is Rose Francisca. I received your question-laden letter the other day, but I believe it would be meaningless to answer the majority of them.

You are fighting this war to liberate France from Germany and I assume you want answers to these questions in order to accomplish that. But what France needs now is the true liberation found in escaping the Primitif of the Rondeau. With France as it is, even someone who leaves the country remains bound by France's Formules and cannot escape this cage of time.

Everything that has occurred outside the country during this year is a false world created from the memories within France's Formules.

You had Jean Missel negotiate with people outside the country back in February, didn't you? But those negotiations are held every year and Sir Jean is negotiating with France's memories of that group outside the country.

France is a meticulous creature. It so fears the outside world that it refuses to Ajouter, uses its immune system to fully establish its own Signe, and even includes the actions taken outside the country during that year. You could say the world we Ajouter is a world created by France's Signe.

The outside world has decided to let France close in on itself.

Because if France were liberated, the world would be forced back 55 years.

The outside world is currently 1999 while our France is connected to 1944.

If we liberate France into the world of 1944, the outside world of 1999 will be annihilated by a 55-year paradox.

So in just a few years more, all external intervention will be cut off and France will fully close up. Once that happens, France will come to a stop with no chance of moving forward. It will repeat this year forever, with us closed inside.

You asked in your previous letter why France wishes to close up.

I think that is because the explosive known as the Wort Bombe had the power to transform the word structure of the spatial Formules. When the Wort Bombe detonated above France and caused the first Primitif, an all-encompassing change occurred to the Formules that form France. Formules are easily affected by the Messages that carry people's wills. Plus, this is a city formed entirely by journal entries. My view as a Correcteur is that the gathered wills of the majority acted as a Message which changed France.

That would mean the people in France at the time were filled with regret and doubt.

"Why is this happening?"

"Can't we redo the past?"

"Why do I feel nothing but anxiety about the future?"

Those thoughts are a given during times of war and they are likely what changed France. They remade it into a world where France could redo itself over and over again while preventing anyone from harming it.

Knowing that, what do you think of France?

I have nothing but contempt for it. And I know how to liberate it. There must be someone in the outside world who knows that as well. Someone on the outside has sent a key here so that this loop can determine everything. And I have a good guess who that person is.

So I believe everything will be decided this time. If it does not work this time, then any further attempts would be meaningless. That is how perfectly everything has been set up.

But this liberation is not something that can be forced onto France.

This world was closed by the will of the people, so it can only be opened by the will of the people. All of the people must break free of the Rondeau or it will be meaningless.

Now, I have a request for you.

Could you think about truly liberating France?

If you agree, then I will send you prophecies at regular intervals from now on. Those prophecies will combine the victory and sacrifice needed to liberate France.

Please think about it.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 1st Entry

A lot of happy things happened this morning. I have so much to write that I will be writing this first entry now. I think I will try to use the ! and ? that Lady Beretta taught me. The nuance for those two is tricky but you can apparently decide whether or not to use them at the end of a sentence by reading the sentence aloud. I will now write another thing that Lady Beretta taught me.

"You need to include a decent space after using ! or ? unless they are followed by a closing quotation mark. That's apparently meant to make your writing easier to read. A really old teacher taught me that when I was little so it must be a pretty old rule."

Isn't that a strange rule? Okay. I hope I did that right. Those symbols do signify a pause for a breath just like the period so the space is probably for the best. And the text is definitely easier to read with a decent gap breaking up the sentences.

Now I will write about myself.

For three days now I have seen strange images whenever I go to sleep. But I know what they are now.

I think they are dreams.

I cannot prove it and I do not know why I am having dreams now.

Yesterday's dream was very strange. I was surrounded by trees much like in Boulogne Forest. I was very tall and I was viewing the trees from the same height as the flying birds.

It was a strange dream. The land from which the trees grew was sloped like a hill and the trees grew as thick as a wall. And the sky was unbelievably blue.

I could see the heavens and the earth at the same time. I could see the blue sky, the green earth below the trees, and the drifting wind.

I woke up immediately after seeing all that.

Was that a memory of Boulogne Forest? Or was it a memory of looking up at the sky from the mansion's garden? I am not sure.

But it was not a bad feeling. I felt an emotion different from happiness. I am not sure what it is called. Even a machine like me has only vague memories of her dream.

I think I will have a dream today as well. That makes me happy.

I will now move on to the next topic. It is something that just now happened. I took the bucket of morning kitchen garbage out the back entrance and placed it on the wheelbarrow. I crouched down to remove the stopper on the wheelbarrow wheel and something tugged at my hair.

I turned around to see what it was and saw a three-tailed fox. That is a variety of Monstrum called a Fantasmé Renard. It lives in the den that Lady Beretta found. There was an entry for it in the Monstrum encyclopedia that Lady Beretta has.

They are docile Monstrums and their only notable feature is the ability to transform into a person just once in their life.

I sometimes see them in the mansion's garden. But the one tugging at my hair was clearly smaller than the ones I had seen before. I have determined it was a child.

I removed my hair from its small paws and told it not to be so mischievous. The strange meeting made me happy as I pushed the wheelbarrow to the garbage area next to the mansion's gate. I looked back while descending the hill to the gate and saw the Fantasmé Renard following me. And there was another one behind it.

I wondered what this was about as I walked through the gate. But neither of them followed me out. They instead hid behind the plants growing from the mansion's hill. Colorful flowers naturally bloom from those plants each year. But the master told me to look after them this year. Those flowers that bloom in summer seemed to be a hiding place for the Fantasmé Renards. The mansion's garden may be their home. I lowered the bucket and returned to find

the two had become three.

The three creatures followed me as I pushed the wheelbarrow up the hill. They would sometimes struggle with each other and cry out as if fighting over who got to go first. I intervened and stopped them whenever that happened.

I arrived back at the top of the hill and found the two parent Fantasmé Renards there. They did not run away when I approached and they were focused on the three behind me.

Then the three were reunited with the two. Only then did the two look at me and make a sound like a small door creaking.

The larger two turned around and ran off. The smaller three followed after them.

I realized what had happened while I watched them go. The larger two had three beautiful tails each. Those tails swayed when they walked and the smaller three were reaching out toward them and trying to play with them.

It was just like how the one tried to play with my hair. The three had probably thought my hair was the same as the parents' tails. I watched them until they vanished into their den on the slope.

They were good neighbors.

<The bell is ringing. It seems someone is at the door.>

Oh. I have to end this here. I will continue it tonight.

Beretta's Journal

Today, I'm writing this at the Arc de Triomphe.

Now, about a month has passed since that incident, but I still haven't been arrested. Looking back at my journal entries from back then, you can tell I felt cornered and it barely sounds like me. But that's probably the real me, so I'm going to use this entry to sum up my thoughts on recent events.

1: Rose Francisca's house

The landlord of my grandma's old *appartement* has not contacted me and all the change of address paperwork is under the German army's control. I assume that is because they want to know and keep secret what species and race people are for their race management policies.

2: Phillip will be participating in the Heavy Barrel battle

There was an announcement on the school message board yesterday. I asked the student affairs office and it seems to be legit.

And yet that idiot still hasn't come to see me since that party a month ago. I thought he was back home riding horses around or something, but what is he thinking? And what am I supposed to do about it? Is he doing this because I chose to participate after he told me not to?

3: Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge will be participating in the Heavy Barrel battle

This was also announced yesterday. He's said to be the strongest Knight Striker of this age and yet he has not been made one of the 16 Sword Masters. Heinz Berge will be fighting the winner of the Heavy Barrel battle. For a normal Knight Striker, that would be an honor, I suppose.

They must really not want this to end with a French victory.

4: I am being much more cautious

I can no longer carelessly ask people about the Attesor Project, so I'm doing my best to research it on my own using the information I have access to. I haven't gone completely taciturn, but...

"You can be scary sometimes."

I get that a lot now. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but I may be like this for the next 4 months.

5: Rosetta is secretly famous

After she made a lunch for Mallette and Mallette brought it to school, there have been a ton of requests to meet her. I went to meet her today and asked if she would be willing to help out at the school festival beginning on the 10th of next month. She said yes.

Rosetta has grown really sharp about a lot of things. That can be a problem but it also makes me happy. This may be how an older sister feels. She asked me about my family the other day, so I took on my grandma's identity and told her about the Sein Frau factory in San Francisco, but it was difficult to talk about Jack McWild like he was my dad.

And it was hard to explain what kind of work is done there. In America, Sein Fraus are targets of discrimination and treated as no more than tools. Rosetta has such a peaceful life here in Europe, so telling her about their tears and suicides would only worry her.

I just know she wants to be human. I still remember what she said on that first night she slept over:

"I feel even happier."

She must be remaking herself for that purpose. That's a relief, but I'm also a bit jealous because I wish I could do the same with myself. It's only about 4 months until the Format, but I want to stick with her to the end.

6: About Knight Strikers

I'm still thinking about this one. My great-grandfather, Jack McWild, tried to create the strongest Barrel, but what is the connection between seeking power like that and working to protect people? I know I'm getting argumentative here,

but it scares me to think he only wanted that power to win the war.

"What kind of power is it I hope to wield?"

I don't know what that power is or if I would be able to wield it.

I hope to find some answers during the school festival's Heavy Barrel battle. Heinz Berge is known as the strongest, so if I see him fight, I might be able to see what a Heavy Barrel's true power is.

But how will that festival turn out? To be honest, there's a lot of pressure on me. I never imagined Phillip would take part. Rumor has it he went to ask Lieutenant Colonel Berge to nominate him just as the Lieutenant Colonel was preparing to do so. What a strange coincidence.

This must be a change to history. And it's not overestimating my own importance to say I caused it. That idiot is almost certainly doing this to send a message to me.

If I started Signing about him, I have a feeling I would gradually start writing worse and worse things. I just hope he loses somewhere along the line. Well, assuming I'm not arrested beforehand.

I think it's about time I got back home. What time is it now anyway? Surely it isn't nine already.

<The plaza clock says it is 8:46 PM.>

Oh, crap!!

Guilliaum's Journal

Today's Events

1: Paris Liberation Strategy Meeting #7

I call it a meeting, but it was only Old "Blue-Eyes" and me. Still, he seemed in a really good mood today. He boasted that he could remove the power limiters on all the Lourd de Marionnettes in Paris by the end of July. All of the ones in Paris have a few of their cylinders removed, but his grandson is in the German army and can apparently get his hands on some of the spare parts.

His grandson will apparently be using the family Lourd de Marionnette at the Sorbonne Lourd de Marionnette battle, but they're probably plotting something there as well. According to Rosetta, that girl and Heinz Berge will be participating too. Who knows how that will turn out.

2: Cleanup after the High Priestess

The things the High Priestess had been preparing to send out were discovered in the neighboring room. The neighbors are a 4-person family with no connection to the Resistance, but when Old "Blue-Eyes" was nonchalantly passing by the High Priestess's room (which is now empty), they called out to him. He is quite well known in Paris after all.

"We didn't want this to fall into German hands, so we hid it away."

The old man's grandson is in the German army, but it seems everyone in Paris assumes it's some kind of plan. They are correct in that assumption, but I hope it doesn't put that grandson in danger.

That family handed him the letters and packages given to the High Priestess between March 20 and 23 for delivery out of the country.

We are taking responsibility by sending them out ourselves.

3: The Germans have begun pursuing the Attesor Project.

And the head of their research team is Heinz Berge. If he still had his memories, he would remember a certain incident almost immediately. He would remember our sole point of contact. And if he did remember, I couldn't stay here in Pairs. I would have to go to Bourgogne.

But it also seems his memories were not fully removed by the Psyche Outer surgery. He was promised the position of the strongest with the Panzer Ritter Project and yet he is pursuing that abominable project from the past. The past is not yet dead.

4: Proof of Rose Francisca's prophecies

On the way to the meeting with Old "Blue-Eyes" today, I saw an old man sitting drunk in front of a bakery. That bakery was hit by a robbery about a month ago and the entire family was killed.

I was curious, so I asked the old man what he was doing there. He spoke on and on in what I would normally have written off as the ravings of a drunk. He said the baker's son had fled the country in June of last year. He also claimed to be that son. He said he had lived outside of France until he returned last year. He said everything about our France is a lie. He said he had tried to stop his family from being killed but they had not believed him. He said he had tried to stop the robbery and gotten shot. He said it had all been over by the time he woke in the hospital.

And he said he wanted to liberate this France that he called a lie.

"Please don't let my family to be killed again."

The way he said that told me he was not lying.

That is all that happened today.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 2nd Entry

I will now continue where I left off. Lady Beretta visited before lunch today. She leaned her *bicyclette* against the mansion's door with her bag on the luggage rack. She took my hand and said the following.

"Can I ask you one thing? I want you to run a stand at the school festival. There are going to be several different stands set up in the university yard and we'll all be eating and singing and dancing there. Just think of it as doing a bunch of unproductive things at the end of the month."

"I see. So it is like the Witch's Sabbath. That was in one of the picture books you gave me."

"Not quite. But I guess it's close enough."

"What do I need to do at this Sabbath? Chop up a sacrifice?"

"Unfortunately there won't be any sacrifices or sacramental bread there. Our department is managing a stand and this one girl who knows how to cook...how should I put this? There were some issues related to filial piety and she's had to drop out."

I do not know what filial piety means. But I asked if I would really be a sufficient replacement for that person.

"Of course. Mallette has been bragging about you. She keeps telling people that a girl who really knows how to cook has been visiting our *appartement*."

Is knowing how to cook really something worth bragging about?

The two of us then entered the kitchen and made lunch. Lady Beretta said she would be visiting the library that afternoon. I have learned a lot about her after speaking with her over the past month. In America, she piloted Lourd de Marionnettes and helped a vigilante group in Image City – San Francisco. Her family runs a Belle de Marionnette maintenance factory. She came to France in

order to give someone a letter.

But there are some things she will not tell me when I ask about them. Like why she cannot get along with Sir Phillip. Or why she looks after me so much.

There is a lot I do not know about her. But there is also a lot I do not know about myself. Who is my father? Why was I made? I simply do not know.

I think there are just some things that will never be known.

But I asked about Sir Phillip during our conversation today.

"Do you fight with Sir Phillip because he is important to you?"

She smiled a little without saying anything. It was not what I would normally describe as a small smile. I am not quite sure how to describe it.

Seeing that smile made me feel like something was caught in my chest.

It was a strange feeling. It was like I had stopped breathing. It was like something could not pass through my chest properly. I thought about the logical reason behind it and asked a question.

"Do you not fight with me or my master because we are not important to you?"

My thoughts here were much like a profit-and-loss calculation. I am not sure how to explain it. But it was like when I choose the best of the vegetables brought by the deliveryman and cook them first. It felt like she had made a decision like that.

It was a strange feeling. It was the feeling of being not chosen. I felt it when I thought Lady Beretta had chosen Sir Phillip over me. Happiness made my chest feel like it was opening up and this was the opposite. It felt like my chest was tightening up.

I realized that the opposite of happiness was not a good thing.

Lady Beretta stopped smiling when she saw my face. And she placed her hand on my head with a look of relief that was different from a smile.

"Unfortunately I can't exactly say I've acted like you or that old man are important to me. And it's all because I jumped into this mansion that one night.

Rosetta. I have already gotten you and that old man caught up in all this and I have to take responsibility for that."

"Responsibility?"

"By not getting you involved in any more danger. By protecting you."

She smiled again there.

"That's the duty of a Lourd de Écrivain. But I can't protect everything."

"There are things not even you can protect?"

"It was because I was injured that I got you two involved. I can barely even protect myself in this war."

The word "war" stuck in my mind. Yes. The master had mentioned that France was about 70% occupied by a country called Germany. We are apparently being given some limited prosperity at their mercy.

I do not know what that means. But Lady Beretta is involved in it. She even bled. I doubt she wants to bleed for people like us who do not know what is happening.

Realizing that removed what was caught in my chest.

I apologized to Lady Beretta. She said nothing and simply rubbed my head.

It was a familiar feeling. Perhaps the father buried somewhere in my memories did the same thing to me before I became self-aware.

We then prepared a light meal in the kitchen.

I decided to chop up and fry the *pommes de terre*. I noticed how they were all shaped differently.

And I realized something strange.

I am a machine. I can grow and evolve to become more human. But I am not completely human.

I am inferior to a human.

So why did I feel that emotion when I thought Lady Beretta was comparing me to Sir Phillip? I questioned the result of that comparison despite knowing

that I am inferior. Why was that? I do not know.

Do the differently-shaped *pommes de terre* think things along those lines?

I felt like I would not be able to chop them up if I kept thinking about that. So I peeled them all and steamed them and crushed them. I then rolled them all into the same shape before adding bread crumbs and making them into small croquettes.

I finished frying them and sprinkled salt on them. That made them all the same shape.

I lined them up on a plate while telling Lady Beretta what had happened in the garden. She was very interested in the Fantasmé Renard story. She said that such things appear a lot in France. She told me a strange story about the Beast of Gévaudan.

Then I heard three sounds from Boulogne Forest. They sounded like stone being struck.

Lady Beretta did not even turn around and said they were gunshots. She said some of the Germans mistook the forest park for a hunting ground and hunted the animals there.

"That must seem horribly savage to the French."

She sounded exasperated. But there was also disapproval in the way she stated it. She is a participant in the war. I do not really understand what that means. But will I also be involved in the war if I begin to feel some kind of emotion in response to those gunshots?

Lady Beretta had a gunshot wound to her leg when she first visited the mansion. I had no emotional reaction to it then. But would I now?

I do not know.

That is what happened today.

Guilliaum's Letter: To a Far Distant Friend

My friend. I am glad to have so many opportunities to write you of late.

A lot has happened recently. It seems things are becoming more difficult.

Here is what Old "Blue-Eyes" told me today:

"The Germans are apparently investigating that weird Attesor Project."

Can you believe it!? And I doubt that old man has realized I was involved in that project!

As far as he knows, I was a "nameless" Lourd de Écrivain who ran around France. And the Attesor Project has been effectively erased from existence. Almost no one involved still lives. And most of the documents and research reports were burned, so it shouldn't be possible to Signe them here in Paris either. My military records are missing for that time period, so when the Germans took me prisoner, they assumed an unofficial unit like mine would not leave any records. But they were mistaken about that. I was actually involved in the Attesor Project which was even more unofficial than the unofficial unit.

Come to think of it, that bastard Heinz was the one and only German who came in contact with the Attesor Project. Because I met him and was defeated by him during a test.

But I never thought he would pursue that project after all this time. Are the Germans feeling the pressure and want to gather all the Perdus Artifice? Are those Gard-class aerial warships not enough for them?

Today, we finally established a new route to get things in and out of the country. We will be using that to make deals with the Allies. I need some specialized parts to fully repair the Lourd de Marionnette that has ended up at my home.

Also, Old "Blue-Eyes" seems to have settled on gathering parts to repair the

Lourd de Marionnettes within France. He was very excited about it.

My task there is to create a list of the Lourd de Marionnettes in Paris. Since we have no tanks or airplanes, we must use those as our weapon. With my old connections and Old "Blue-Eyes" connections, we should find a fair number of them. If we are to hold an operation to liberate Paris, it will probably happen in August. I predict the Allies' western front will go on the offensive sometime around June. We must keep careful watch so we can take action of our own once they arrive near Paris.

I am going to be busy.

That about sums it up for me. Rosetta is, well, cheerful. She didn't used to be this way, but now I can tell the difference between her cheerful days and her non-cheerful day.

I guess that's a good thing?

But she has been making an awful lot of vegetarian dishes lately. She may have come to dislike blood after everything she has learned. I hope that's something I can change.

Also, I'm starting to feel like I should fully believe what Rose Francisca is saying. I've just been Ajouter-ing so many disconcerting things of late. I'm starting to wonder if I really am a lie.

Goodbye for now. Until next time.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 10:00, I led the training at the training grounds. At 12:30, Phillip Missel joined us in Expert de Épée. He fought five mock battles with the others and swiftly won each one. According to him, the new cylinder system was causing issues and he could only fight short battles.

At 18:20, training ended. I predicted Phillip Missel would have earned the others' approval through the mock battles. I did indeed see him at the center of their group as they left.

At 20:31, a direct telegram arrived from HQ.

"You will be assigned leader of the Attesor Project Research Team on June 1. Your wellbeing is very important for another project, so you must make appropriate adjustments before that date arrives."

At 22:18, I discovered a part of my own past while researching the documents related to the Attesor Project. I will Leren the newspaper clipping here:

"The funeral for the family of Captain Heinz Berge, who has returned from Bourgogne, will be held at Grunewald Park Graveyard today at 2 PM. The forecast is for rain, so be careful."

The date was from just after the end of the previous great war. Thanks to my Psyche Outer surgery, I had no memory of or emotion about the revelation that I had a family, that they were dead, and that I had likely attended their funeral.

I was only interested in the fact that the newspaper article mentioned that I had been in Bourgogne. I cannot recall any battle-related memories of that time. Why is that? All my memories of the previous great war exist in the back of my mind, so why are the ones from the Bourgogne Region the only ones missing? Was the article merely mistaken? I have no way of knowing.

Chapter 8: Heart



第八章

「心」

1944・05・10
～05・12

右手で抱き返すと
ベレッタ様は
おとなしくなりました——。

05/10/1944 - 05/12/1944

When I held her in my right hand Lady Beretta calmed down.

May 10, 1944

Letter Left by Beretta: To Mallette, My Good Friend who is Still Asleep

After my first morning class today, I have somewhere to visit and then I'll bring Rosetta over to start preparing for the school festival. Make sure you come help build the stand, okay?

Now, I'm guessing we'll have a written test during that first class today. It's an industrial markets class, so it will probably be about Lourd de Marionnettes or something. But Professor Helier is nice, so we'll probably just have to write an essay about our thoughts on the subject like usual. And we can wait to turn it in until the end of the festival. Of course, it was that excessive kindness that led his wife to leave him. But anyway.

I'll be going then. We'll be sleeping over at the school tonight, so I hope you're ready.

Blackboard in the Industrial Markets Class: Today's Class

Choose one of the following topics and use the provided paper to write up your thoughts on the topic.

- 1: The Structure of the Lourd de Marionnettes Market
- 2: How the Car Industry Which Opened Up America's Economy is Currently Spinning Its Wheels
- 3: A Nearby Industrial Product

If you are unable to complete your essay in time, treat it as homework due by the end of the school festival.

Sorbonne University PR Club Extra Edition: Pre-Festival Report

Today (5/10) the school festival preparations have begun, but supplies have been limited for the past few years due to the war. That can be disappointing, but it only affects our supplies. We have filled ourselves with the spirit of this city of revolution, so we live a far more fulfilled life on the mental front.

This year, all 8 departments and 72 clubs are setting up so many stands, posters, signs, and other decorations that you would think we had occupied not just the university itself, but the courtyard and road out front as well. Most likely, the school will once more turn a blind eye as students spend the night working, so we predict the area around the university will be bustling with activity throughout the night.

The bistros and general stores near the school will remain open 24 hours a day while preparing to support the students working through the night and to drive out the drunk students. Meanwhile, the German military police, the French police who work for them, and the public morals committee intend to tighten up security with patrols around the clock.

Of course, when we approached a member of each group for comment, we received the following responses:

"I want to see what a French festival looks like."

"We did the same thing back in the day, so go nuts with it."

"Yeah, sorry about this, everyone. Ha ha ha ha."

The patrols will almost certainly be in name only, just like always. Some volunteers are already planning to get the patrols involved in a road party (the usual affair where the security officials help block off the road so they can turn it into a giant bar), so there isn't going to be anyone left to tell us to get to

sleep. The leader of those volunteers is Mallette Harculia, Drunken Queen of the Economics Department. Everyone, you can rest easy and drink.

Now, a lot of preparations were made today, but that famous exchange student Miss Beretta McWild made a stand so big they couldn't get it out of the courtyard where they built it. This thoughtlessness was resolved by her Belle de Marionnette friend Miss Rosetta Balleroy (When asked if the Belle de Marionnette was her *femme de ménage*, she kicked our reporter to the side and demanded it be corrected to friend) who used large prosthetic arms to safely carry the stand out front.

Note: This incident sent one of our reporters to the hospital, so the PR Committee is in urgent need of a new field reporter.

Now, one of the reasons that stand grew so large is due to the portable oven installed inside it. They will apparently be using that to cook. And the cooking will be done by Miss Rosetta who carried the stand. At this point, she is more human than Belle de Marionnette and visiting the stand by the eastern entrance would be well worth it to gaze upon her beauty.

Next, let us talk about the Student Council which causes a commotion each year by having the Festival Committee read a vulgar statement for the festival's opening ceremony.

Quick Message from the Sorbonne University Student Council: To the School Festival Committee

Just like last year, the statements for the opening and closing ceremonies will be changed last-minute to a random student essay swiped from the administrative office.

We kind of have to after how much everyone loved last year's closing ceremony where you read Miss Mallette Harculia's "Thoughts on Sex Education". We're hoping for something as good as that this year too.

Send in a ninja or something so the old administrators don't catch you swiping the essays. (Oh, will writing this down increase the odds of you being Signe-d?)

Also, can you hurry up and release the program and tournament chart for the Lourd de Marionnette battles? The winner fights a match against that Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge, so who we bet on depends on who's likely to be the winner.

Then again, no one can beat that Lieutenant Colonel who's supposedly on the level of a Sword Master, so I guess this isn't very conducive to gambling.

Personally, I bet 10 francs on Beretta from Economics. Her rival will definitely be Phillip who was given a special spot by the Germans. I'm from the same department as him and we would probably still be drinking together if he hadn't joined the German army. None of this is easy.

Phillip is from the Chevalier de Paris family. Even if that position no longer exists, there are tons of Lourd de Écrivains in France who were influenced by Missel.

And in a sparring match when he was 11, Phillip himself smashed up his grandfather's knee so bad that elderly hero could never fight again. I've heard he's been avoiding Lourd de Marionnettes ever since, so why did he decide to

Recréa again now? One of those two is bound to win this. There's no doubting that.

–Student Council President

Sorbonne University Student Message Board:

Notification from the Festival Committee

The biggest event of the 2nd day is the Lourd de Marionnette battles and the preparations are now complete.

It will take a tournament format, so during the 2nd round, the winners of the 1st and 2nd battles and of the 3rd and 4th battles will face each other. And so on.

1st Battle

- **Special Participant: Phillip Missel**
- **Art Department Representative: Aerios Bent**

2nd Battle

- **Math Department Representative: Joseph Acor**
- **Pharmaceutical Department Representative: Saint-Pierre Lant**

3rd Battle

- **Engineering Department Representative: Clure Raspail**
- **Athletic Department Representative: Lorent Andalusia**

4th Battle

- **Literature Department Representative: Cress Alsace**
- **Economics Department Representative: Beretta McWild**

As a prize for victory, the school will give an "A" to everyone in one class of

the winner's choosing. We hope everyone involved will give it their best. May the goddess of war and freedom rule the heavens and the earth along with us.

–Festival Committee

Rosetta's Journal

A lot of interesting things happened today.

One of them is the fact that I am writing this below the night sky.

Because today Lady Beretta came and took me to a place known as college. We are still working even now.

It is already two in the morning. But everyone is doing various kinds of work or playing musical instruments and singing along or running around the streets naked until a local resident sends them flying. It is quite a commotion.

I helped make something using the tools I normally use to repair the windows. It is like a small cabin.

It resembles the mansion's chicken coop that I used the tools to destroy about eight years ago. Inside the cabin Lady Mallette installed the portable stove and oven she had brought from the *appartement*.

I will use those to cook tomorrow. The oven is large so I intend to cook *côtelette de viande broche*. I would like to bake a pie. But that would take too much time and I have selected simpler dishes instead.

I was surprised to find everyone was unfamiliar with how to cook fried foods in the oven.

First heat up the oven to 250 degrees Celsius and line up the unfried items inside. Then lightly sprinkle them with oil heated up to the same temperature and wait a few minutes.

By using a stepped layout in the oven the cooking will finish much faster than frying them in oil like normal. It also uses very little oil which makes it easier for women to eat. The skewers are to make it easier to eat while walking.

I am writing this on Lady Beretta's report papers.

She does not have much left. Tomorrow I think I will go to the store in the school – the building known as a school strangely has another building with a different function contained inside it – to buy some more.

That reminds me that Lady Beretta taught me about parentheses and how to use them.

- **() are used to insert your own thoughts or impression.**

The distinction between that and the "–" seems tricky but I will probably understand if I read back over everything.

I will try to use them well.

Lady Mallette and the others are carefully removing the coal from the oven. I will tell them we should be able to use the coal without a fire tomorrow if we store it together properly.

I have told them.

Lady Beretta is already falling asleep next to me. She said she wrote a long essay in class and had a lot of other odd jobs to complete.

When moving the stand the two of us rode her *bicyclette* back to the mansion – the master was out at the time – to retrieve my large prosthetic arms from the first floor storeroom. We pushed them along like a cart on the way back.

Those giant arms are acting as Lady Beretta's pillow right now. Her large bag is also resting atop the arms. I removed those large arms as soon as I had finished carrying the stand – some nearby gentlemen ran over to watch me swap out arms and I ended up completing the swap in a small school room with only Lady Beretta with me – and I reattached the human-modeled ones which I am now using to write this journal entry.

So right now I am lying down and using the streetlight to write.

This streetlight must be one of the lights I could see from the mansion's second floor.

That makes me happy. (It really does.)

After writing this much I feel like I can do a much better job of writing what I

want to say than I used to. Learning various symbols to express myself must have taught me how to write various thoughts in different ways.

Cooking is the same.

A knife can only cut apart. That is why pots and cutting boards and spatulas exist. Those provide so many more methods of cooking.

Before I only had a knife when it came to writing my journal. But now I am using my words more skillfully as I write down my thoughts. That is how it feels to me. It is a strange feeling. Yes. It does not become strange because I write that it is strange. I wrote that because I wanted to convey that the feeling is strange.

I think that is the foundation of the Signe in France.

You write what you think. You use your written expressions to create yourself. From now on I will not simply write these entries aimlessly. I will write them to convey something. And that leads me to a certain thought.

Why do I discover these things while Lady Beretta is with me? I do not at all know whether or not that is a coincidence. But by definitely Signe-ing this, I can convey to myself how I feel about Lady Beretta.

It is a strange thing. I think it was different last year. Lady Beretta was not with me last year. But that is not what I mean. I am not sure how to describe it. But something was different.

I have to wonder if I was sleeping for decades before I awoke to this higher level of consciousness. It has apparently been 25 years since I was made. So could I have been sleeping for that long period of time?

If so I am glad I woke up.

Yes. And I am not just glad about myself. I am also glad that Lady Beretta is with me.

<Lady Beretta reached out her hand in her sleep. She clings to me.>

This also happened when I spent the night in Lady Beretta's room. Holding onto things in her sleep is apparently a special ability of hers. I do not know what it means. But I see a lot in common between the way she acts then and

the babies holding onto their mothers I see in the city.

<She pulls me toward her and buries her face in my chest. It is difficult to move.>

I have lost free use of my hand. I am quickly writing this down with my left hand.

When I held her in my right hand Lady Beretta calmed down. That is why.

She is probably saying something in her sleep. But I will not listen to it as it is probably some kind of secret.

She would tell me if I asked her about it. She always tells me about such things even when something is worrying her.

I have several questions. But I think that is for the best. I will be able to Signe it eventually. Just as my writing is gradually transforming from a simple series of words into a conversation carrying emotion. I will try to Signe the answers to my own questions.

<Lady Beretta muttered something.

She has a pained look on her face. She seems to have gasped.>

The mothers I see in the city will calm their crying babies by holding them like something precious. So I think I will hold Lady Beretta in my arms. That is the correct answer for her since she is holding onto me as if I am her mother.

But there is one other thing I must write.

My arms still feel awkward when holding her.

Today... Today I have decided I want arms with actual warmth to them. Like a human's. I do not mind if that means I must say goodbye to the prosthetics she is using as a pillow.

Can I become human?

I do not think everything I did today was part of my job. That is what I believe.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today, I was off duty. At 10:00, the 2nd Aide visited. He told me that the western front is at a standstill and that the general headquarters are divided when it comes to the Allies' major attack.

The 352nd Infantry Division to which my platoon belongs was given emergency orders to gather on the Normandy coast. General Rommel sent the orders to each platoon commander individually.

The 2nd Aide had the following to say about the matter:

"The general headquarters believes an Allied landing operation would occur near Calais, but General Rommel and other high-ranking army officers seem to believe the enemy is targeting the Normandy coast."

I had him confirm the current status of the platoon and then I left for the Paris branch office.

At 14:35, I sent a telegram from the branch office to the general headquarters. I requested they postpone appointing me head of the Attesor Project Research Team which was scheduled for June 1. I believe everything will be decided by the action or inaction of the Allies in early June.

At 16:21, I returned to the barracks. I removed my coat and checked the pocket. For some reason, I found a bookmark there.

I had no memory of the bookmark. My journal entry for April 20 said I had found it then, but all memory of it had been erased. I predict that is due to the Psyche Outer surgery. All that remains is the bookmark in my hand which has a single pressed four o'clock flower on it.

I feel no emotion over the loss of my memories. I feel an almost dutiful expectation over becoming more and more like a machine. And about that alone, I feel no surprise or doubt. I will simply Lernen the thoughts in the back

of my mind and go to sleep.

May 11, 1944

Sorbonne University PR Club Extra Edition: First Day of the School Festival

The school festival began today, but it's looking like it's going to develop into a wild, all-night party like it does every year. The faculty lodgings have closed their doors to make sure nothing "unfortunate" happens, but most of the normal buildings are full of festivities in preparation for the second day.

After all, the Lourd de Marionnette battles everyone is looking forward to are tomorrow. Even as we edit this in the evening, the cheerleading groups for each representative are clashing and it feels like a riot could start in some areas.

The special report for today would have to be about the essay read at the opening ceremony. It was by Miss Mallette Harculia who still wants the title of the Drunken Queen.

Some people complained that it was just the same thing as last year, but you should have seen the reaction when the Student Council President got up in front of the entire student body in the courtyard and said "Problems with Rearing Children, by Mallette Harculia". How well it was received proved better than anything else that you should stick with what works. After the opening ceremony, the miss herself stormed into the Festival Committee HQ and demanded her stand be given the dozen bottles of Dom Pérignon – which could not have been easy to gather the way things are – that were meant for the after-festival party.

This year's festival was a bit lacking in noise and color since German restrictions kept us from getting any fireworks, but that seems to have

explosively increased everyone's sales.

According to a customer survey, the bestselling products as of 4:08 PM today are the following two:

1: The Discarded Military Supplies Market

There was a bazaar for weapons, uniforms, and the like from both the German and French armies. I might seem surprising that the Germans would allow a market like this, but there are rumors that most of the money goes back to the cash-strapped Germans. Makes you wonder which country is occupying which.

2: The PR Club's School Festival Photos

The PR Club was selling an album of important photos from the school festival. This time, we rush-edited together some photos we took during the preparations and the first half of today. The cover was a photo of the newly-famous pair of Miss Beretta McWild and Miss Rosetta Balleroy sleeping in each other's arms. I think that was the secret to its success. At the very least, I know the Crossdresser's Beauty Pageant section at the end didn't help.

Also, the cameraman who took the photo was soon hit by one of Miss Beretta's kicks and sent to the hospital. Thank you for your sacrifice. It has done wonders for our sales. Hooray!

Command within the German Army's Paris Branch Office: To Branch Office Personnel

Over the past several weeks, dress uniforms, mock bullets, and weapons-related equipment have been stolen from the branch office's storage on several occasions. Keep an eye on each other to prevent any more such crimes.

Also, every university in Paris begins a festival today. Do not let the French people's high spirits influence you. You must remain prepared for any sign of the enemy arriving from the west.

We look forward to your renewed efforts.

May 12, 1944

Mock Battle Message Board: Things to Keep in Mind During a Lourd de Marionnette Battle

- Bow before and after the battle.
- Obey the referee's decisions.
- If you cannot return to battle because you cannot replace a major lost part, you forfeit the match.
- Any attack on a fallen opponent and any attack meant to slice or crush an opponent's head, spine, or torso is a foul.
- Taking the spectators or referee hostage is a foul.
- Usage of cannons and other projectile weapons is not allowed.
- The emergency team from Paris's general hospital insists they can "fully heal any and all injuries", so there is no need to worry about harming your opponent.
- But if your behavior is unbecoming of a French person, you will be removed.

–Festival Committee

Dopester Message Board behind the Mock Battleground: Speculation for 1st Round 4th Match

How should I put it? I'd say it's about 4:6 in Beretta's favor. I doubt we'll see an upset like in the 1st Match where Phillip won despite the 6:4 odds against him.

Also, everyone expects Beretta to win the whole thing, but they're holding back from betting on her because she's a girl. In fact, it's been almost entirely the girls betting on her this time. It's looking like women are going to be the winners in both gambling and suffrage. But her opponent, Cress Alsace, was apparently lent a Lourd de Marionnette by the Germans thanks to some connections through his father. His father owns a newspaper company, so you can imagine why there's a connection to the Germans there.

On one side is a bourgeois Recréa-ing into a cutting-edge German Lourd de Marionnette with no power restrictions. On the other is a female exchange student Recréa-ing into an old female Lourd de Marionnette borrowed from the school with power restrictions in place. Either way, this isn't something you see every day. I bet it will be over in the blink of an eye.

Now, who will you back?

—Dopester Alef Marlow

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

Right away: kaboom.

<A fierce attack hits their chest.>

There, one wooden spear hit and it's over~ That was fast. I was wondering what a Knight Striker is, but all I did was Write Bring into the Heavy Barrel and hit someone, so I was hardly fighting with the pride of a Knight Striker.

My opponent was just too weak. It doesn't matter how good the Barrel is if you can't use it.

The battle really was over in the blink of an eye. I didn't even need to use the Over Emblem. Grazie's Over Emblem is a mobility-focused transformation, but I've never actually tried it. The angel wing emblems on the shoulders aren't showing any sign of activating. I don't know if I'll get to use that this time. The stopgap wooden spear is doing pretty well.

<The referee was shocked into motionless by how quickly the match ended.> C'mon, ref. Snap out of it and give me the win. You can think about it back in the hangar.

Hey, Rosetta. Are you watching?

<She is waving to me.

The old man sitting next to her follows suit and waves as well.> I love how you don't have a care in the world. And I can relax more with you around. Now if only I could prioritize myself as a Knight Striker as much as I prioritize making you feel happy.

I'll be heading back now, so make sure you have my clothes read-...eh?

<The referee is frantically shouting at me.

“Bow before returning to the hangar!”>

Oh, I forgot. If I return to the hangar without Pointing, I might be disqualified for “unbecoming behavior”.

My bad, my bad. Anyway, that’s a win for the first round. With this kind of speed, you’d think it was rigged. Keh keh keh.

Dopester Message Board behind the Mock Battle Ground: Speculation for 2nd Round 2nd Match

Thanks to the 1st round, the odds are 8:2 in Beretta's favor.

Now, the winner of this match will be up against Phillip Missel who has already moved on to the final round.

Phillip sure is strong. That's all I can say. You can see why he has a sword emblem on each shoulder. Even the Germans have to be shocked that Paris has such a powerful Lourd de Écrivain. I mean, the Germans only wanted the name of the former Chevalier de Paris, but now that he's actually fighting, he's proven himself to be strong indeed.

Then there's the Expert de Épée he's Recréa-ed into. It is so powerful and you can't even be jealous since it hasn't had its power control restored. The way he fights without relying on strength shows his skill is real.

Why would he join the Germans? That is the real mystery here. The final round will start after a break for lunch, so I hope to enjoy that longer wait. I really do.

–Dopester Alef Marlow

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

Right away: kapow.

<A fierce attack hits their chest.>

There, another wooden spear hit and it's over, over, over~!!

This is turning out to be really easy without even getting into the initial issue of responsibility or what a Knight Striker is. I was hoping to get a lot of thinking done while Write Bringing into this Heavy Barrel, but I just don't have time. Is no one going to let me fight a real Knight Striker's battle in these Heavy Barrel battles? Write Bringing into a Heavy Barrel isn't supposed to be a game.

I want to ask why these guys seem so intent on immediately attacking me without a second thought, but I can already hear Mallette making a dirty joke about that. And laughing at a crude joke isn't going to help with much right now.

<The referee is staring blankly and says nothing.> Hey, ref. Snap out of it and give me the win. Now how's Rosetta?

<Rosetta is waving. The old man next to her follows suit.

It is weird how they look like a granddaughter and her grandfather.> There really is something about Rosetta that draws in the people around her. But I wonder who that old man next to her is. ...Oh?

<The fallen Heavy Barrel gets up. The right arm is smashed, but it can apparently still move.> Ohh, he got back up, he got back up. He's raising his weapon, he's raising his weapon. Good job, good job.

And kablam.

<Another fierce attack hits their chest.>

Now he's not about to get back up. Pathetic. Okay, ref. I really did win this time, so hurry up and announce it. Ah, wait.

"Rosetta! Don't wave around the underwear I gave you when you wave at me!!"

First I'm impressed with her and now she's worrying me. It's always something with her.

Dopester Message Board behind the Mock Battle Ground: General Speculation for 3rd Round

Okay, these matches have been quite exciting, but they have also been unusually quick compared to past years.

That has got to be due to the great skill of the two who have reached the final round. They used that to obliterate the competition with overwhelming speed.

Special Participant Phillip, who had been gathering focus behind the scenes, ended the first and second rounds in a single attack, demonstrating the depth of this skill. It is a complete mystery why such a skilled Lourd de Écrivain had not made an appearance before this or why he finally did so now. Come to think of it, his Missel family used to use Lourd de Marionnettes to act as Paris's guardians. Well, men have their reasons for what they do. It makes him seem even cooler if you ask me.

On the other hand, Beretta is an exchange student from America. A female Lourd de Écrivain has a very American feel to it, but she is strong too. Makes you wonder if she's sold her soul to the devil or something.

Now, then. Who will win the match between them?

The betting is currently at 5:5 and showing no sign of budging. That is not a fun spot for me to be in. Not at all.

—Dopester Alef Marlow

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 1st Entry

I will write today's events in multiple entries because I feel like a lot is going to happen.

Lady Beretta was angry with me just now. She warned me instead of just lashing out at me. But it was still disappointing. My focus was apparently slipping.

But Lady Beretta is part of the reason why. There are times when she definitely looks my way while Recréa-ing. I am not entirely sure why I am so certain of that though. Perhaps there is a sort of resonance because we are both machines – she counts as a machine while Recréa-ing into a Lourd de Marionnette. And it makes me very happy when she looks my way. That makes me want to respond in some way. So I waved back and dropped her underwear. That is why she was angry.

I will try to restrain myself from now on. I think I will still end up waving though. I seem unable to control myself when I feel happy. Why is that, when I am a machine?

Anyway, Lady Beretta is strong.

She has already fought two matches today and she won them both in an instant. Everyone in the stands – what I thought were stairs are officially known as stands – was surprised and that made me realize how incredible Lady Beretta is. I asked the old man sitting next to me and he said that Lady Beretta is not normal. That means she is abnormal.

But I am worried. She will lose herself in thought while walking or fighting in the Lourd de Marionnette. I do not think anyone else noticed. But I sometimes feel a chill while watching her. There is a calm stillness as she thinks about something.

Lady Beretta is still Recréa-ing while sitting in the place known as a hangar.

She ate the lunch I brought for her – she was almost entirely naked while she did so – and then she Recréa-ed again.

She says she is going to take a nap. But I think that is a lie.

She is thinking about something.

This has happened before on occasion. But this seems to be a gathering of all those thoughts. I think she will tell me what it is once she has an answer. So I will not ask.

That is why I am leaving her alone while I write this in a corner of the dining hall located next to the mock battleground.

Earlier I saw Sir Phillip on his own. He made sure Lady Beretta was not with me and then sat in the seat across from me.

Everyone in the dining hall kept their distance after that. They moved away.

Sir Phillip's expression was very serious.

"I will win."

He told me that and I asked a question in reply.

"Why do you want to defeat Lady Beretta?"

He thought for a moment and gave a simple answer.

"I want to get her to quit being a Lourd de Écrivain. Even when that idiot tries to restrain herself she ends up fighting just like this. Because she has the makings of a true Lourd de Écrivain."

He smiled a little then.

"But it's too dangerous. And a guy doesn't want to see a girl in danger."

"Lady Beretta feels the same. She does not to see you or the rest of us in danger."

"That's what makes her such an idiot. She has a habit of rushing in on her own. She doesn't give a thought to whether she has someone by her side or who will come and save her if she fails."

"She can indeed be somewhat forceful. But."

“But nothing. And even if there is a ‘but’ she has a tendency to rush into danger before anyone else. She’s too naïve. I don’t know if this will make her happy or unhappy. But I do know I’ve never seen someone like that end up happy. Especially with the world the way it is these days.”

“Because of the war you mean?”

“More or less. France had Joan of Arc. But she too charged in on her own and ended up getting burned at the stake. Act like a hero during a war and you generally get killed for the trouble.”

“...She does like to have her way in such things.”

“In everything you mean.”

I smiled a bit at that.

He was right. I understood what he was saying. Lady Beretta tended to take action before anyone could say anything to her. Although that did make her quite reliable.

But. She said she does not want to get us involved in the war. Meanwhile, her unilateral actions are bringing her ever closer to that war herself.

War means bloodshed. I know from cooking that dead things have very little blood. And Lady Beretta will lose her blood if she joins the war.

That means she will die.

What am I supposed to do about that?

I (or should I say we?) do not want to see Lady Beretta in danger.

So should I try to restrict her actions like Sir Phillip?

I think this is a difficult question.

She said we would be safe if she puts herself in danger.

But is that really true? When I felt happy I think she did as well. That is certain. It is the same when she looks my way from the Lourd de Marionnette.

Lady Beretta would not be displeased when I am happy.

So is there no way to similarly make both of us safe?

I do not know. But I feel like there has to be a better solution.

I plan to ponder this some more without settling on a definitive conclusion.

It is almost 1 PM. That is when the final match begins. I am about to return to the hangar.

Referee's Words: Announcement to Begin the Final Match

The 167th Lourd de Marionnette Battle Final Match will now begin.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

Hm.

It's been five minutes since this started, but this one's going to be tricky.

My, oh, my. I know next to nothing about that black Barrel called the Expert de Épée.

Based on the sword crest on the shoulders, it's probably special-made for the Missel family, but it has a real intimidating presence to it. It doesn't just give off the presence of the person inside it.

<The unmoving black Barrel looks hunched over due to the auxiliary seat joined with the shoulders.

You do not see that often with modern Barrels and it would require some way of accounting for the front and back balance during the design phase.>

I think the Protected Empress back at that old man's place is like that too.

But, ugh. What am I supposed to do?

Hey, Phillip. Get moving. He isn't falling for my provocations and, when I charge in, he either falls back or stays entirely motionless to take advantage of my action. Yet it all looks so clumsy and dangerous. That is about right for him, though.

Anyway, what should I do? Staring each other down only makes this tenser and I'm guessing only the spectators like this kind of cheap act.

<Everyone gulps as they watch on.>

If they actually thought about it, they'd understand that we're just staring at each other without doing a thing.

That guy never makes the move in anything. That's why I start thinking about

making the move myself. ...Wait, what am I saying? Nothing good ever comes of just letting my thoughts out like this. In fact, I'm not really thinking at all.

What am I supposed to do?

Hey, Phillip. Have you ever thought what it is you're doing?

What you're doing now is a complete waste of your time. On August 1, you join a Resistance uprising, defeat a few enemy Barrels, and then get killed by Heinz Berge.

You only have 3 months left to live. So why are you here? I know it's pointless to ask since you don't know you're going to die, but you have to know you're part of a fight that could lead to that. If you had time to fix up that Heavy Barrel, do some training, and participate in these battles...then wasn't there something better you could have been doing?

Not that he would understand what I'm talking about.

But after all the time we've spent together, he probably thinks he knows what I'm thinking.

What am I supposed to do? Anyway, I'd hoped to think about some things and Sign a decent conclusion, but all my thoughts are like something from a lover's spat. Is that just how much trouble I'm having with coming up with an answer this time?

I mean, I never thought Phillip would really make it this far.

And I don't know why he's Write Bringed into that Heavy Barrel.

I also don't know what he hopes to accomplish by beating me here.

Ahh, I can't believe this. I had predicted that black Barrel would make an appearance here, but I hadn't thought about what that meant. I was too naïve.

Maybe I was too focused on myself.

I was thinking about what it means for me to be a Knight Striker, but I never even considered what other people thought about it.

He's probably been thinking about it too. I mean, he showed up here after I said I would be participating.

As a Knight Striker, I was only looking at my own surroundings while he was looking at his surroundings and me.

Which means, um...

He understand me, but I don't understand him.

Hm.

...Oh, crap!

Wow. I take that back! I just Signed something really dangerous, so what do I do!?

He understands me, but I don't understand him? That means I'm aware of some things that put me at a disadvantage. What was I thinking!?

Where's that entry in the memory bank? Delete, delete, delete!

Heavy Barrel Grazie's System Message

Memory bank entries cannot be altered while the Heavy Barrel is in use.
Please edit the contents while in standby mode.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

I can't delete it while it's in use!? Gwah! This is really bad. What do I do?

[illegible]

This is a world where what you write defines you. So that was a critical mistake.

I'll just have to do something.

But, ahh, I can't believe this. I can't stop my thoughts.

Since when have I not understood him?

I was just really, really careless, so I didn't think he would make it this far and I hadn't given any serious thought to why he was participating!!

Crap. This is clearly more than just a game.

I was too self-centered.

After coming to Paris as an “exchange student” and getting caught up in so much trouble, I started feeling like a proper Knight Striker. I came here to take revenge or responsibility because a classmate was injured for me, but...what’s this? Why do I feel so confused?

I'm having so much trouble facing someone who seriously came here to defeat me. I'm such an idiot. No, I always knew I was an idiot.

But it turns out I don't understand the person in Paris I thought I understood more than anyone.

This is so silly. It's almost laughable. I can't believe it.

Hey, Phillip. Can you hear me? ...No, I suppose not.

<He is not moving. He is simply waiting.> But whatever. Just listen. I'm probably thinking about you like crazy right now. I'm more serious about it than I ever have been before. And I'm also thinking about something else: —What does it mean to be Knight Striker?

Since you're the son of a former Chevalier de Paris family, I imagine you're very familiar with the common answer.

It means to protect people.

Then why are you here to defeat me?

Will defeating me protect me somehow?

I'm giving this all sorts of thought, you know?

Were you thinking about me a lot too? When you left letters at my room, when you attended lectures for me, when I kicked you, when we ate side by side, when said you were joining the German army and we parted ways at the university gate?

Well, were you?

<He is not moving. He is simply waiting.> Dammit, you idiot. React to my Signing already. I guess that's hoping for too much.

But anyway, I'm sure this is mostly me being conceited, but you've been thinking about me a lot, haven't you? Otherwise, you wouldn't have made it this far.

I can't believe this. Yeah, I can't believe it. I can't at all. I really, really can't.

I can be honest about all this inside this closed Heavy Barrel.

Of course, all of these feelings are just on my part. It's not like you've checked on them with a Point and it's not like I've asked anyone.

And I'm not about to do that either.

<He is not moving. He is simply waiting.> At the very least, I'm not doing it with words.

But I just can't believe it. I feel like you've completely outdone me here.

Oh, no!! I'm getting pretty lax with my side there. This really isn't like me at

all. I'm not a cat-like girl that loves indulging in others and letting others indulge in her like Mallette. And I'm not as honest as Rosetta. What am I supposed to do at times like this? Really, what?

What do I do? Just what do I do?

How long has it been like this? How long have you been, um, well, above me?

This is bad. I'm Signing some pretty bad things.

<He is not moving. He is simply waiting.> We're glaring at each other in a standstill and my thoughts keep slipping further and further away from anything related to the battle.

But if I don't think, I can't brace myself. If I don't find an answer, I'll be overwhelmed by anxiety. If I don't understand him, I just have to figure out why I don't.

So why is it?

I've been thinking about you, but I guess you've been thinking about me even more and that's come as a shock.

To be blunt, it probably makes me happy. I need to be aware of that.

<He is not moving. He is simply waiting.> Silence, huh? Yes, that's right. I was so reliant on your silence. I was always only Pointing you, so I never Signed anything behind that silence.

I'm so stupid.

But I kind of get it now. I liked your silence and I just left everything with that silence. That would be when we branched apart. ...It's been a while then.

I'm such a coward.

At my first lecture at the university, I was overwhelmed by the rapid-fire French, but it was your notes that saved me.

You probably have no idea how much of a relief that was, do you?

We were in different departments, but our classes were nearby and we ended up being together a lot. At the start of the new term, I Signed all through the classroom to see if you were in the class with me. And at last year's year-end

party...

You don't know about any of that, do you?

I still have all the letters and notes you gave me. You can call me obstinate if you want. I don't mind...

I can't believe this.

I just can't. I'm hopeless.

The more I think, the more I get stuck with these thoughts.

I sound casual enough, but there's a heavy, heavy numbness deep in my mind.

I'm at such a disadvantage in this fight. But I understand three things now.

First, I'm going to rethink myself once this is over. I doubt I can become as honest as Rosetta, but I think I can do better.

Second, I've reassessed my opinion of you.

And third...yes, I think we would make a good pair.

Regardless of whether you're going to die or not, I won't forget that you changed history. You came here because you're a Lourd de Écrivain and that's also the reason why you'll die, isn't it?

I know I'm being one-sided on the matter, but there it is.

Yes, it really is one-sided. You're right in front of me, but here I am simply speculating about this. Buuuut it's not like I have a choice. Pointing you only shows me silence and you don't let anything show on the surface, so I can only Sign. At the very least, the position you hold for me is made up of everything I've Signed before and everything I've thought based on that.

Laughable, isn't it? But can I have another one of my cowardly thoughts?

What if you haven't been thinking about me at all? What if you just think of me as an impertinent girl and you're only here to teach me a lesson by hurting me?

I can't deny that possibility. And look, I just Signed it.

That could be what this is about.

Even though I really don't want that to be the case. But this could all be based on what I hope is true and it'll end up being nothing more than my Signing. So that thought is insurance in case that happens. If it does happen, I don't want to be some stupid girl that had too high an opinion of herself.

Ah ha ha.

But, still, I think I've found my answer. So let's fight. We can't just sit around.

<One minute has passed since the battle began. The referee is signaling for us to hurry up and fight.> Only a minute? You really can get a lot of thinking done while Write Bringing. But that's fine. It was a valuable minute. I'll make sure I have a chance to type up the contents of the memory bank later.

Yes.

So let's fight, Phillip.

It's time to pay you back and we'll find out if I have insufficient funds or if I'll get some change in return. Once this battle is over, I'm sure I'll give more thought to how I interact with Heavy Barrels.

I doubt I'll ever again Write Bring in order to fight while in France.

What am I fighting for?

I don't want to fight without a clear answer to that question. Because it scares me... So I'll use the remaining three months to do what I wanted to do concerning my grandma and the Attesor Project. Then I'll return to my own world.

Oh.

<The crowd is cheering. I look over and see the black Barrel slowly pointing its wooden sword toward me.> What? Are you going to say something?

<"Uhh.">

Uh? Really? What is that supposed to be?

<"Well, you see.">

I see what?

<“Umm.”>

Um isn't any better. Just say it already, please.

Don't go silent! You can't come this far and then stop talking!!”

“If you have something to say, just say it!!”

<“Okay. If you lose this battle, let's start officially going out!!”>

Heavy Barrel Grazie's System Message

Due to sensory overload, the Write Bringer's thought connection was shut down for 0.00000003 seconds.

Restarting.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

—What is this monkey saying!?

<The crowd is going wild.>

Don't laugh about it!

And what is with you? I was just seriously thinking about our relationship and debating whether to say something like that!! And what was that!?

Start "officially" going out? What does that even mean!?

"We already are going out, you moron!!"

<"Oh, are we?">

Oh, are we!? Who was it that suddenly grabbed me and kissed me last fall!?

<"Umm, then forget I said anything. Ha ha ha."> Don't say that and then try to laugh off the embarrassment.

Gwahh.

...All my tension is gone now. What do I do? Really, what do I do?

You'd better take responsibility for this.

I'm crying here, inside the Heavy Barrel.

Why is it?

Why are Heavy Barrel sight devices designed so they can't cry?

I wish I could bawl like a little kid right now, so this is just a waste.

Damn. Damn. Damn!! Argh, I don't care! I don't care anymore!!

I thought I understood you. And you thought you understood me, didn't you? Since we don't truly understand what the other is thinking, we have to Sign our

own assumptions and occasionally check to see if we were right.

Aren't you going to fight, Phillip? It doesn't matter. The past doesn't matter either. Let's just ignore our friends, our classmates, being a Knight Striker, my grandma, and the Attesor Project. Let's ignore it all.

Let's fulfill our purposes in standing right here right now.

Let's wipe the slate clean here!!

After all this, I'll do everything I can to ensure you lose.

I'll cut the sight device limiter and directly link the wide-range vision with my reflexes.

"Wide-Range Vision Strengthening: Sign."

My vision just got a lot clearer. This vision lets me view both the heavens and the earth at the same time.

<The sky is azure, the dirt brown, and my opponent black.

With the limiter cut, the fingers of the black Barrel and the particles of dust in the air are burned into my eyes.

Your average person would not be able to last a minute with their nerves directly linked to the outside world.> But I've found myself in situations requiring this several times before, so I can manage more than three minutes.

And this isn't all.

Based on Phillip's fighting style, he must think he can defeat a counterattack from this female Grazie. I need to cut even more limiters. I have the power restrictions in place, so I'm not sure I can draw out its full power even if I cut limiters like crazy.

I need to use my full power in every sense of the phrase.

I'll open the armor panels and loosen the joints for full-power mode.

"Armor Swap-Out 'Normal Mode → Full-Power Attack Mode': Sign."

Then I'll shift the engine output to max power.

"Preparing full engine system for max output: Sign."

And I'll release the part of the engine system used for attack.

"Readying Full Drive: Sign."

The engine system is roaring and I'm reminded that I'm a machine right now.

<The crowd is cheering.>

Of course they are. You don't see full-power mode often and not many Knight Strikers can do it. Ether light is floating around my entire body above the armor dress. With the Full Drive ready, the Over Emblems across my body have entered standby.

The standard Over Emblems for the HLP018 Grazie are the angel wings on the shoulders. That means mobility. Whether that gives you the ability to land a counter attack is up to the pilot's willpower.

<Expert de Épée has also readied its Full Drive.> Oh, so he's serious.

What was it you said in America when using full-power mode like this?

—Beginning Full Drive with all armaments and abilities to respond to the enemy force. Striking back.

Heavy Barrel Grazie's System Message

To prepare for Full Drive, the Write Bringer's thought connection was shut down for 0.0002 seconds.

Restarting.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

<The black Heavy Barrel named Expert de Épée is moving.> Here he comes!
He also charged forward on reflex.

The enemy has a wooden sword. He's holding it in his right hand. So I circle around to the right.

<Expert de Épée lightly rotates while moving toward me.

Despite his heavy body, he remains oriented toward me and moves forward.>
That takes guts and it is admittedly the right way to fight. I have a spear, so I can't let him get too close. Because...oh, no!? He's charging right in.

I make a light thrust to hold him off.

<When the wooden spear thrusts forward, Expert de Épée stops its advance and swings its wooden sword.

With a dull sound, the wooden sword strikes the wooden spear and the spear is knocked from Grazie's grasp.

Without even taking into account the power restriction, a male Heavy Barrel simply has greater arm strength than a female Heavy Barrel.> !? I lost my weapon already.

Fall back, fall back, fall back!!

<Expert de Épée crouches low and moves forward.

It pursues me.>

He's fast.

I can't escape in time.

<I can't escape in time!!>

My will accepted that with a Sign. Since the writing of my will establishes everything here, it's all over if I accept it before Pointing.

<The swiftly-moving black giant swings the wooden sword up from below.

The sword tip launches a gust of wind.

This attack is meant to settle things.>

Am I going to get hit and that's that? Of course not!

This isn't enough to get my will to give up!!

I'll dodge it.

And there's only one way: jump over it!

To do that, I move forward.

And I leap. It's the same thing I did to hide in that mansion's courtyard.

It's not the kind of action you expect of a Heavy Barrel and only a Knight Striker can pull it off.

This thing weighs about 20 tons and I'm going to make it soar.

I step forward.

I make the jump with my right foot.

I jump almost straight up. I bend the steel body and control it as if to fly back-first up into heaven.

Of course, Grazie lacks the power of Protected Empress.

<With the power restriction on top of that, this is not an absolute power.> I'm aware of that.

So I maintain my willpower. I fly instead of jump.

My heart cries out.

What I need here are my emotions. At the moment, I only feel the pleasure of having free control of myself while Write Bringing into a Heavy Barrel. And I use the Over Emblem to make that sweet emotion a reality.

Fly!!



<Over Emblem “Ange” partial activation.

The back of Grazie’s armor dress rises up and two angular wings jut out toward heaven.

Similarly, the entire body is surrounded by a bit of skin-like light in order to support those wings.

And Grazie’s face devices are covered by a true face.

A Heavy Barrel combines machine and human and the Over Emblem transforms it into something else. Into the form determined by the Lives in the Emblem.

The Lives forming Over Emblem “Ange” are almost identical to those of an angel.

So Grazie becomes an angel and flies through the sky.> This isn’t a full activation, but it’s enough.

The body knows how to use the wings and I can leave it to that, so let’s do this.

The wings are fully formed in just an instant. Then they forcefully flap at the wind.

At the same time, I reach out my hand.

I send my right fist toward Philip’s shoulder. I reach for the left shoulder – opposite of the right arm that is raising his sword – and I use that to pull my body up.

<Grazie uses Expert de Épée’s shoulder to do a one-armed handstand in midair.> I don’t know if you call that jumping over him or climbing over him, but it’s quite a stunt either way.

That leaves landing. Landing a mass of metal weighing more than 20 tons without breaking it requires some delicate movements.

I twist my body around to land while facing him.

OK.

My feet fall first, I work to make sure my heels land last, I bend my ankles, I

bend my knees, I bend my hips, I lower my chest, and I have my body sink down.

And just as my heels make contact, I close the wings to flap at the air and leap back!!

<As I move back, Expert de Épée's wooden sword grazes my chest in a horizontal slash.

It only takes an instant.

The wings on my back vanish and the Over Emblem is removed. My power drops somewhat.> I can't believe this. You turn around way too fast, Phillip. You should've still had your back turned, so I really am impressed.

But fine. I have a weapon now.

<A wooden spear falls from the sky. It is the one the Expert de Épée knocked away earlier.

I grab it out of the air and lightly spin it around to hold it at the ready.

I can hear the cheering crowd.

I don't know if that is for my acrobatics or for catching the spear.

But I can hear them cheering all the same.>

The battle continues.

I make a sudden jab.

<Expert de Épée does not dodge.>

Eh?

<With a high-pitched sound, the wooden spear jabs into Expert de Épée's chest and splits the armor.

But Expert de Épée moves forward.

It does not stop.

It holds Grazie's spear in its left hand and charges forward.> Idiot, why would you charge for-

<Expert de Épée raises the wooden sword in its right hand while its chest is

shattered.

With the spear in its left hand, there is nothing Grazie can do.> Oh, no! At this rate...

<Expert de Épée is starting to activate its Over Emblem.

Glowing ether surrounds the pitch-black Barrel and begins to take form.

The light is scarlet.

The color of fire.

That light covers Expert de Épée's entire body as it charges forward.> I need to dodge...but I can't!?

<Just then, Expert de Épée trembles for just a moment and then blood erupts from its entire body.> Eh?

<No.

What looks like blood is heated oil.

The black oil erupts from the gaps in Expert de Épée's armor and from its various motors and it does not stop.> ...Don't tell me...

<The Barrel is old and has not been used for over a decade, so there has apparently been a conflict with the modern parts used when making repairs. The constant and intense movements in Full Drive and the attempt to activate the Over Emblem in response to the Write Bringer's will widened the scars of that conflict.

The wound instantly throws off the body's balance of strength and it is torn apart.

The Write Bringer's own abilities would have played a part, but the most likely reason Expert de Épée attempted a quick resolution was because he was aware of the Barrel's limits.

But Expert de Épée is still moving.>

He's still moving? But he can barely gather any strength now. What does he hope to accomplish?

<Expert de Épée dropped its wooden sword to the ground.

The light surrounding the pitch-black Barrel has disappeared.

While wet oil sprays out into the sunlight, the Barrel stands before Grazie and slowly...> You idiot! I won't let you collapse!!

I wrap Grazie's arms around his back as if in an embrace and I support him.

...I will support him.

<Expert de Épée is limp within Grazie's arms.> You can probably still move, but don't force yourself here, Phillip.

I understand now. Or I think I do, anyway.

I understand just how desperate you are to stop me. I can think about why later on. But not right now.

I support his body and slowly carry his giant form over to the mock battleground's wall.

<A voice escapes Expert de Épée's speaking device.

"Sorry I couldn't win.">

I sat him by the wall without responding. We could talk this out later.

At the moment, I apparently didn't have time for a break.

<The eastern hangar door opens and a new Heavy Barrel steps out.

It too is pitch black.

Everyone knows its name. That is Rot Löwe, Barrel of Army Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge.

The Emblem on the right shoulder is the person mark of a German Infantry Division Heavy Barrel Platoon. The Emblem on the left shoulder is the roaring face of a red lion to match its name. It already holds a large shield in one hand and a long wooden sword in the other.> So he's already ready to do this. I'm in Full Drive and as ready for a fight as I'll ever be. Now's the time to do this. And I'm sure he feels the same way.

He probably came out now because he's in top form at the moment. And he's history's strongest Knight Striker.

Let's take a look at his strength. It's not about whether I stand a chance against him or not. I'll see what he can tell me about Knight Strikers and Heavy Barrels.

I've already seen a lot.

Rosetta waving at me over there is already becoming human.

Phillip showed me one form of a Knight Striker as a French Lourd de Écrivain.

So what will the Germans' greatest Panzer Kavalier be able to show me?

And I...

Referee's Words: Announcement to Begin the Special Match

The special match between Beretta McWild, Champion of the 167th Lourd de Marionnette Battles, and Heinz Berge, Lieutenant Colonel of the German Army, will now begin.

Chapter 9: Loss



第九章

「負」

1944・05・12

あの攻撃の
流れにおいて
自分は何を
思い出したのか——。

05/12/1944

What did I remember during that attack?

Heinz Berge's Schreiben: Entry in Grösse Panzer Rot Löwe's Memory Bank

"The current Schreiben reaction speed is approximately x78."

At this speed, each second feels like 78 seconds. The sky looks like solid mass of azure. The wind constantly flows gently across the Panzer's surface. Conversely, the female Grösse Panzer called Grazie is moving slowly. It is attempting to take a step, but when viewed at this speed, I can clearly predict what action it will take next.

<Grazie's step toward me has the leg pointed somewhat inwards.> I can conclude it is pretending to approach me but will actually run to the side. It will feel like 31 more seconds until Grazie's leg slowly reaches the ground. This takes a very long time. I have decided to loosen my union with the Grösse Panzer.

"The current Schreiben reaction speed is approximately x62."

It is said the fastest human reaction speed is 0.1 seconds. It takes that long for your body to react and move. Using that as the baseline, I currently have 62 chances to react to anything.

I have gained this reaction speed by uniting with a Grösse Panzer.

To me, 88 seconds have passed since the battle began.

<Grazie leans to the right in preparation to run.

The metal body is slowly starting to advance. It takes its third step.> Everything is so very slow.

In truth, it has been less than 2 seconds. To a normal human, this female Grösse Panzer would be moving abnormally fast. In the previous battle, there had been a lot of unnecessary movement, but its mobility had been impressive. The Panzer Kavalier clearly understands that a Grösse Panzer is part of her body

and not just a weapon. Her ability is even greater than Phillip Missel's.

But hers is a human speed. And humans are slow.

Humans can sometimes slice through light, but that is not because they are moving faster than light. It means they have nearly precognitive instincts that allow them to turn their blade in the direction from which the light will arrive.

Most of those known as Sword Masters were made immortal by the influence of ether and experience in battle, so they could train their instincts to a point dozens of times beyond the average person.

They see the future early and act based on that.

I see the present slowly and act based on that.

I cannot predict light and slice through it, but if my speed could exceed that of light, I expect I would be able to slice through it.

<Grazie is running to the side while still facing me. The foot that took the third step leaves the ground and the foot that is taking the fourth step is reaching the ground. The wooden spear's aim never leaves me while it is held below Grazie's arm.

It is slow.>

No matter how quickly someone moves as a human, I see them as moving even slower than a walk.

There is no need to play along. They are moving with all their might, so I must respond in kind and fight.

I take my first step. It feels like moving through water, but my union with the Grösse Panzer thanks to the Panzer Ritter Project frees me from the bonds of human ability and allows me to draw out almost the full power of the Grösse Panzer.

When someone Schreibens into a Grösse Panzer, the Grösse Panzer's max power is relative to the human's ability. But in the Panzer Ritter Project, my body was almost entirely replaced with specialized prosthetics that do not restrict the Grösse Panzer's abilities.

The cylinders, steel, engine, and power system all demonstrate the Grösse

Panzer's own abilities.

Rot Löwe has a cooling system and it can maintain a power output of approximately 7 times that of a normal Panzer while I am Schreiben-ed into it.

The max output has been measured up to 21 times normal and it nearly tore the Panzer apart.

After passing about 10 times normal, all actions break the sound barrier and Rot Löwe becomes a weapon of indiscriminate destruction. Rot Löwe's greatest flaw is the inability to activate the Over Emblem, Eisen Löwe, due to my lack of emotions. The Over Emblem is engraved in the armor, but it has no purpose other than to prove that this is indeed a Grösse Panzer.

At 10 times power or more, I can slice through supersonic bullets.

My current power is at 5 times. Thus, I approach the female Grösse Panzer at 5 times her speed.

Grösse Panzers normally move at speeds relative to a human. So an 8-yard Grösse Panzer can move at about 4 times the speed of a human.

A human's maximum running speed is about 16mph on average. A Grösse Panzer's maximum speed is about 64mph.

Rot Löwe is moving at 5 times that.

<Rather than the wind, it is the air that is moving. The color of the air shows that its vibrations are hitting the walls of the mock battlefield and the barrier field rising from there.

This is a color only known by those who live at Grösse Panzer speed.> Due to the burden on the Panzer, supersonic mobility is only possible for an instant, but for that instant, it finally feels like the machine can keep up with my reflexes.

The machine's abilities have yet to reach the machine's essence.

I predict that a Panzer will eventually be developed that can keep up with my x100+ reaction speed.

That would be the strongest Panzer.

I move forward. I take the second step. It feels like moving through water, but I am clearly moving faster than my opponent.

<Grazie's movement has changed.

It is moving forward instead of to the right.>

Did she see my movement? No, she likely predicted it. She sensed that I would step forward and had her action change. Her predictive power is greater than my reactions.

But I am not light or an artillery shell. I am a Grösse Panzer that can think about what I am doing 62 times as often as a human.

So I think.

The enemy is charging in with her wooden spear. I block it with my shield on the left.

<I raise my shield at 5 times the speed of the enemy's wooden spear.

Then the air shakes violently.

Rot Löwe whips up a powerful wind and Grazie whips up a loud wind.

Cheers belatedly respond to the two Panzers' movements.

It is a slow and surging sound.

Rot Löwe's experimental inertial control emblems activate in response to the shock and burden to it. The burden is reduced.> This noise is just like the battlefield. Even on the battlefield, this speed changes an instantaneous gunshot into a 20-second roar. This must be the same.

<The wooden spear reaches me. It hits the shield.

Even the metallic sound of wood on steel rings out like an extended note of a brass instrument.> She is slow. So I will now defeat her. I circle behind her to perfectly settle this.

<Grazie takes a step in preparation to turn around.> In that same span of time, I take 5 steps. I arrive behind the enemy, where she cannot reach me.

I conclude that Grazie is trying to turn around.

<Grazie makes a jump.

It jumps to the center of the mock battlefield in order to move away from Rot Löwe.> Had she predicted she would be unable to turn around? Or had she feared the thought of an enemy behind her?

I confirm that my Verbesserung was inadequate. The enemy is moving with all her might and she has great skill. And there is wind and noise all around us. I conclude that this is a battlefield.

“The current Schreiben reaction speed is approximately $\times 10^2$.”

This is my first time using this speed against a Grösse Panzer.

<Grazie twists around in midair.

It attempts to thrust its spear out while facing me.> The spear is long enough. By grabbing the back end of the spear, the tip can reach me.

I move my body back 3 yards.

<The spear thrusts toward me.>

It will not hit, so I think about my next move.

<I see a light in my slowly moving and changing visual footage.

It is within the stands.>

I predict the light is reflecting off of a spectator's jewelry.

To eliminate any possible concerns, I take this chance to Verbesserung.

<It is an earring worn by an old man.

It is shaped like a sword.

Anyone in Paris would recognize that sword emblem.

That is an earring of the Missel family, a former Chevalier de Paris family.> Only one old man would be wearing that.

Is that Jean Missel!?

<The old man stands up and looks at me.

There is a suggestive smile on his face.>

There is no doubting it. I Lernen a clear resemblance to Phillip Missel in that face.

I conclude that is his grandfather, Jean Missel.

During World War One, he made a fool of us on the front line and I even crossed swords with him once...

Grösse Panzer Rot Löwe's Geschäftlich Schrift: High Speed Entry to the Memory Bank

Altering Schreiben user's memory. A rapid return of a past memory has been confirmed. The return of memories in battle could provide a dangerous shock. Accessing the Psyche Outer mechanism to erase the resurrected memory.

After a 0.0000001 second separation, the memory connection with the Schreiben User will be reestablished.

Heinz Berge's Schreiben: Entry in Grösse Panzer Rot Löwe's Memory Bank

I can predict what just happened.

<An old man in the stands is looking at me.> I don't know who it is. I conclude it is no one of importance. I focus entirely on Grazie.

<The wooden spear has been thrust toward me as far as it can reach.> I conclude that I was distracted by the stands for a long time.

I predict the enemy will pull back the spear as she lands and then make her next move.

I plan to move for-

<Just then, wings grow from Grazie's back.

They grow in an instant, provide lift, and allow midair movement.

Grazie moves further forward and the spear leaves its hand while it is thrust forward.

The spear was thrown toward Rot Löwe's face!> ———Impossible to dodge.

I conclude a brief lapse of attention and an inexplicable cutoff of my memories caused me to lose focus. If I move my head at supersonic speeds, I could dodge this, but that could do damage to my cervical vertebrae. Since General Rommel has summoned me to Normandy, if I am to take damage here, I must let the spear hit me in an area that will cause minimum damage.

The enemy's attack hits me.

Beretta's Write Bring: Entry in Heavy Barrel Grazie's Memory Bank

I hit!!

<The wooden spear stabs into the left eye of the enemy's facial structure.>
That won't be a fatal blow, but it should stop him.

I flap my wings once for attitude control as I land.

As for the faltering enemy...

<He does not stop. He charges forward.> Hey, wait, stop! Why do guys always...ah!? This is crazy!!

Oh, no.

<Impact!>

It was shallow, but his sword hit me.

I was sent flying. Damn, he really is strong. Given the positioning, that must have smashed my right shoulder. He really knows when to push himself in battle.

But if you're going to do it like that, then I can't let you beat me. I'm fighting to see what a Heavy Barrel's strength is to me. I have to figure that out. Just like Rosetta has grown honest with her feelings, I have to grow honest with my idea of a Knight Striker!!

<I nearly fall over but keep my balance.

The enemy rapidly turns around. The previous impact nearly knocked the spear loose from his face.> Dammit.

While approaching, I kick my left leg up as a feint.

<The enemy takes a step back to adjust his position and to remain cautious of

my movement.> Did he fall for it? It's not clear, but I just have to do what I can.

While falling back, I swung my arm to allow the impact to leave my right shoulder and to keep my balance.

<He moves forward to pursue me.> Here he comes. He's definitely falling for my trick now.

The arm I swung to keep my balance grabs the spear sticking out of his face.

I gather some slight strength in my arm to begin a thrusting motion.

<The enemy senses it and swings his head to pull the spear out himself.> Damn he's perceptive. I guess it's true he sees things at 100 times human speed. He doesn't react to my actions. He reacts to the very beginning of my actions.

This is no joke. And now a right kick!!

You're off your balance after swinging your head to pull out that spear, aren't you!?

<The enemy plants a foot on the ground. That foot breaks the sound barrier and creates a white cloud of water vapor.

That acts as powerful attitude control. With a rumble, his foot tears into the mock battlefield's ground and the bricks and stone forming it fly up into the air.> ...What kind of power and attitude control was that!?

He's too strong.

<The enemy corrects his posture and attacks.

Rot Löwe swings down a wooden sword that strikes Grazie's right knee as it kicks up.

The sword was made from lignum vitae submerged in water and it easily smashes the steel knee.> Intense pain.

But what do I care, you idiot? I was prepared for this. I can keep going. Plus, it wasn't the kick I was expecting something from. Just as the right lower leg broke and dangled down from the knee, I cleanly spun my body around on my left leg.

And in my right hand...

<The spear.>

I'll give him an attack he can't dodge no matter how fast he is.

I'll release my max attack power.

Just how destructive is a spear when it's held by a Heavy Barrel and swung all the way around in a circle?

Centrifugal force, weight, and speed.

<The spear tip bends like a whip and briefly has a cloud trailing behind it.> A horizontal swing is the hardest of all attacks to dodge. And a spear's span is far greater than a sword's.

Hit him!! This is my way of fighting and this is my greatest strength.

<A metallic clang overpowers all else.

Grazie rotated to place its full weight behind the spear attack.

But it did not hit.

As the female Heavy Barrel swung its special attack, Rot Löwe performed a tackle.

There was no attempt to dodge. Only a crude collision.> An impact.

———He got me...!? Is he not even using a shield!?

<But the result was never seen.

Just as Grazie and Rot Löwe would have collided, another Heavy Barrel moved between them to protect Grazie.

It is Expert de Épée.

Its engine system is damaged and it should barely be able to move, but the pilot's willpower and skill got it to move. It used its full speed to charge between the two Barrels so quickly that not even Rot Löwe could take emergency evasive action.

But it could not stop Rot Löwe.

Rot Löwe was built to endure high-speed mobility, the burdens of its own

actions, and the impacts of enemy attacks, so its attack easily knocked away both the female Heavy Barrel and the male Heavy Barrel attempting to protect the female one.

An impact and the shattering of a spear can be heard. Heavy Barrels are said to be the heaviest of all land weapons, yet two of them are broken and sent flying.> I collapsed.

...Phillip moved?

<With a roar, Expert de Épée and Grazie roll over to the wall.> ...I knew it.

That idiot. What was he thinking with his Barrel that badly damaged?

You really are dumb. Did you do that because protecting people is a Knight Striker's job? A lot of good that did when we were both taken out. Ha ha ha. You're an idiot to the very end.

I can't believe this...

I'm no match for you.

Out of the three Barrels on this mock battlefield, I'm the weakest one. Heinz Berge is far superior when it comes to combat ability and Phillip Missel is superior when it comes to the desire to protect someone.

I really can't believe it. And I'm exhausted.

I'm tired.

So very tired...

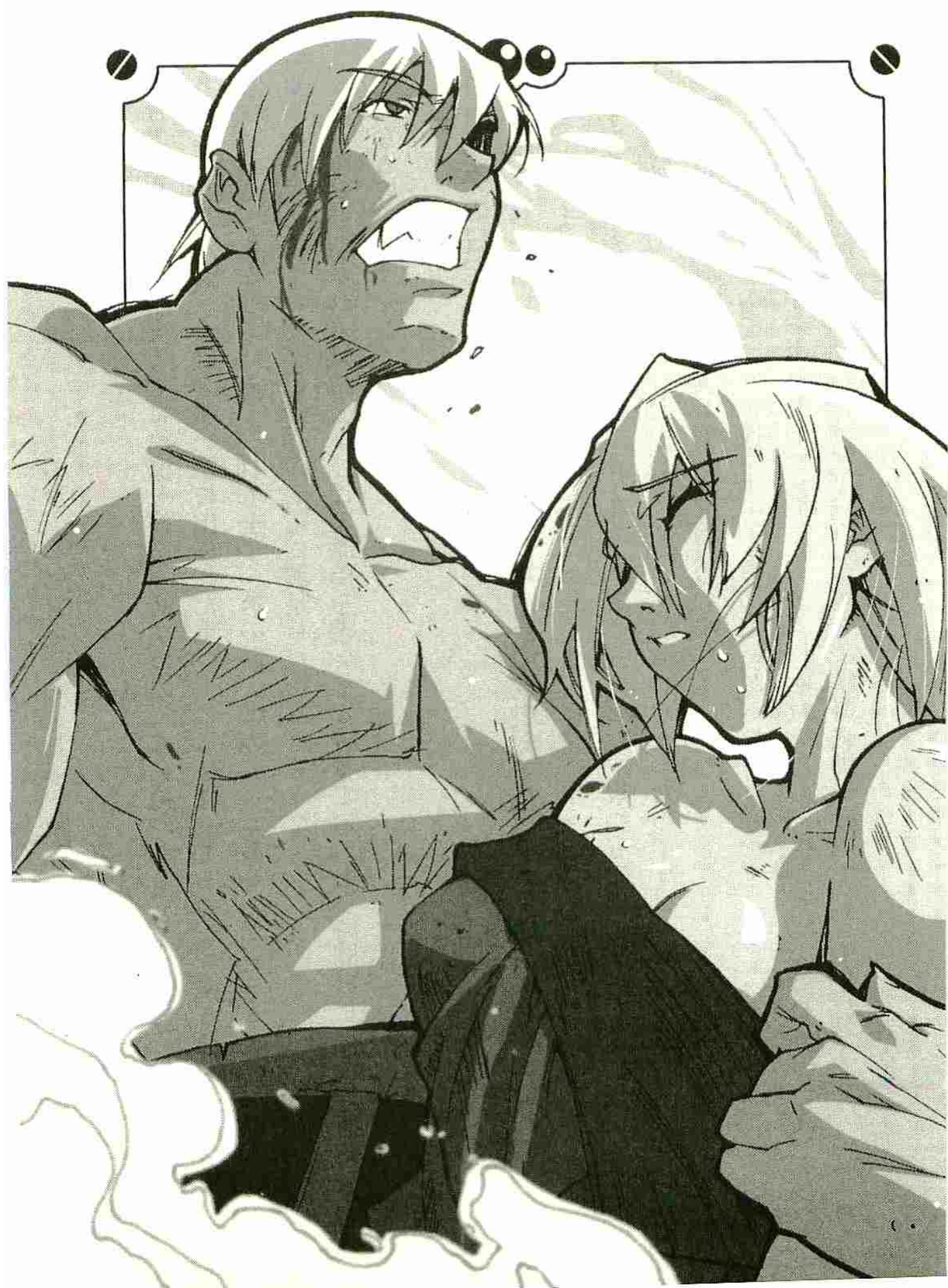
Sorbonne University PR Club Extra Edition: Lourd de Marionnette Battle Post-Match Report

The special battle was over in an instant.

That was a match that left us with a lot to think about. Why did Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Berge move so that Beretta McWild's spear would hit him? Why did he need to make such an intense attack at the very end there? And why did Phillip Missel, who joined the German army, intervene to protect Miss Beretta, who should be his enemy?

There are a lot of questions here. But everyone at the mock battlefield should know that the final question has already been somewhat answered. When Miss Beretta's Grazie and Mr. Phillip's Expert de Épée collapsed, no one watching could move due to how incredible and quick a resolution it was. The only person moving was Mr. Phillip who kicked open the door to the Study on Expert de Épée's back.

He only wore the pants of a German uniform with the jacket draped over his shoulders as he ran over to Grazie. The photo taken by our reporter shows how his right arm was broken, the bone was sticking out, and it was coated with blood.



He called out Miss Beretta's name and opened Grazie's Study. Miss Beretta was just as bloody as Mr. Phillip but she was unconscious as she rolled out in the nude. He wrapped her in his uniform's jacket and – this is just like something he would do – carried her over his shoulder.

He looked up at the black Lourd de Marionnette standing at the center of the mock battlefield.

I imagine every French person at the mock battlefield could understand the anger in his eyes and face.

This likely came from the second question: Why did the German army's strongest Lourd de Écrivain have to go that far?

According to those in the know, Lieutenant Colonel Berge's movements arrived just below the speed of sound.

Even if he could not dodge Miss Beretta's attack, couldn't he have fought some other way? That is, other than performing a tackle that did not make use of his shield or sword.

Everyone saw that question in Mr. Phillip's anger.

A few of the people who saw it concluded that the descendant of the Chevalier de Paris had not actually joined the Germans.

He attempted to protect our representative, Miss Beretta.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Berge's Rot Löwe wordlessly turned its back and left for the hangar.

According to the records, this was the first time in seven years that Lieutenant Colonel Berge was injured while Recréa-ing. The female Lourd de Écrivain who fearlessly confronted and injured him and the Chevalier de Paris who attempted to protect her are receiving Correcteur healing in the Paris General Hospital.

It seems the hospital's director was personally watching the match at the mock battlefield.

He said they would be fully healed in time for the dance tonight and he would make sure they had a dance together.

Also, the Missel family says they will fully repair every Lourd de Marionnette

that took part in these mock battles free of charge. Jean Missel, that hero of the previous great war, had come to view today's battles and he must have been satisfied with his grandson's performance.

Now, as I write this, we still have three hours until the dance in the courtyard.

What is going to happen there?

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 2nd Entry

I am writing this inside the mansion. The school festival is having its dance. But I walked home.

A lot happened.

I could not move immediately after the Lourd de Marionnette battle ended. There were many reasons for that. But the biggest was that I could not believe Lady Beretta had lost. I Signe-d that she had won. And then the Ajouter of reality hit me.

Lady Beretta had lost. Lady Beretta, who had said she would protect us, had lost.

And Sir Phillip saved her and left the mock battlefield while I was still unable to move.

The old man sitting next to me nodded and then left as well.

I still could not move.

The next thing I knew I was sitting alone in the dining hall near the mock battlefield – it was Lady Mallette and that group that found me there – and had been there for four hours. The sun would be setting soon and things were growing noisy outside. A group known as the music club was beginning their night performance.

A few of Lady Mallette's group went outside.

There would apparently be a dance party during that night performance. Everyone had gone to search for a partner.

Lady Mallette breathed cigarette smoke from her nose and said "well I shouldn't have any trouble finding someone" despite not looking very confident.

She was keeping me company while I could not move. All of them are such good people. They really are. I had to return to the mansion and make dinner for the master. But I did not.

That was wrong of me. No one told me it was okay to do that. I had spent 15 years with the master telling me to do my job right. But I waited for Lady Beretta for myself and not for my job.

Why did I do that? I do not know.

I asked Lady Mallette about that and about something else that was bothering me. Why had I been unable to move immediately after Lady Beretta lost? And why was I waiting?

Lady Mallette gave a very simple answer.

“Isn’t that because you’re no longer just a machine?”

I am a machine. I am not human. But Lady Mallette made it sound so simple.

“If you were a machine you would have been able to move even after Beretta lost. But you were so shocked by it that you couldn’t move. And you’re still worried about her. You’re growing less and less perfect. As a machine I mean.”

“So am I of poor quality if you view me as a machine?”

“I don’t think you were originally. But Beretta said you’re fine this way.”

“Why would Lady Beretta say that about me? Do you believe her?”

“That girl won’t give many details. But she was born to a family of Belle de Marionnette engineers. Do you know how Belle de Marionnettes are treated in America?”

I said I did not and she smiled a little. As if to say there was no helping that.

She told me a lot:

- America has a serious racial discrimination problem. To avoid dealing with their social problems they treat different races and Belle de Marionnettes as the underclass.
- Lady Beretta helped her parents by looking after the Belle de

Marionnettes that had been left in a warehouse unable to move. She worked to bring them out into the world once more. She gave them names and had them grow more human. But then they told her what they had been through. They had all been overworked to the point of breaking down or treated like tools to be loved.

- Lady Beretta would make periodic repairs to the Belle de Marionnettes she had raised and sent to work in someone's home. The owners would only ever demand the Belle de Marionnettes be made to do more work.
- And just before the next repair visit the Belle de Marionnettes would break themselves without telling her anything. Those given harsh jobs would intentionally place themselves in harm's way during the course of their work. The ones used as tools to be loved would throw themselves down the stairs. They would destroy themselves.
- Lady Beretta would gather up their broken parts afterwards. Every time it was the same. Their joints and hearts would still be those of a doll. But they had always developed the ability to shed tears like a human.

Those tears were shed by something inhuman. The only human ability they gained was the one to cry.

I have never shed tears. Kings and queens in picture books often shed tears when they lose their princess. Based on that and what Lady Mallette said I can assume that tears are shed when you feel a powerful emotion in response to losing something – and powerfully enough to feel the need to throw yourself down the stairs.

I can say that tears are brought by an unpleasant emotion.

That must be what is known as sorrow. I have yet to shed tears. That means I have never felt that unpleasant emotion. That must be because I am with Lady Beretta.

I kind of understand why Lady Beretta is so concerned with me. She had not told me the answer. But I felt like I understood it all.

It was selfish and uninvited. But it was not unpleasant.

She has never taught me an unpleasant emotion.

She has protected me.

This is what Lady Mallette said:

“That Phillip guy and Berretta are both Lourd de Écrivains who see protecting people as their primary duty. So it’s only natural for him to move when no one else can.”

“Then can we just let them protect us?”

“That’s why you need to think about what happened today. You could not move for Beretta today. If you regret that then you may want to protect her. And...”

“And?”

“If you want to protect her then you first need to become the kind of person who will not worry her.”

Lady Mallette added “like me” in a joking voice and laughed.

Become a person.

Lady Mallette’s words are right there in my memory.

I am not like the Belle de Marionnettes in America. I have not experienced anything unpleasant and I do not want to destroy myself. But can I never rid Lady Beretta of her worry as long as I am a Belle de Marionnette?

That must be why she gets angry when I treat myself like a doll. The unpleasant feelings inside her start to rise to the surface.

I thought through all that in the dining hall. I stopped thinking when Lady Beretta returned.

Her injuries were fully healed. She had changed clothes again. The clothes apparently belonged to Sir Phillip’s mother. She said they had stopped by his mansion to borrow them. They were large red clothes with the hem spread wide. They looked like something out of a picture book.

Sir Phillip arrived soon thereafter.

His injured right arm was wrapped in bandages and hanging from his neck by

a sling. He was not fully healed because he did not receive Correcteur healing until after Lady Beretta.

Everyone cheered for them. Everyone slapped them on the head or poked at them. They seemed to be enjoying it and they were carried out into the courtyard.

I stayed on the outside of the group for a while. But then I went home. For some reason I felt like I could not be there. I cannot dance with my metal legs and that may have been part of it.

But there was a bigger reason.

- **I alone am different.**

I am not human. I am simply something that is protected.

But the other people treat me like I am human.

I do not like that kindness.

I want to truly be the same as Lady Beretta and Sir Phillip and Lady Mallette. I do not want to simply be taught and protected. If I was not a Belle de Marionnette then Lady Beretta would not have to worry so much. Sir Phillip would have greeted me normally when we first met. And Lady Mallette would invite me when she goes out drinking.

And today. I would have been able to move for Lady Beretta and I would have been able to dance...and I would not be writing this now.

I do not want to find myself unable to move when someone is hurt.

I thought about all this while walking back home alone.

I want to become human. But.

I am human.

I Signe that but the Ajouter always comes back the same: <Rosetta is a Belle de Marionnette.>

Please.

I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human.

I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I
am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I
am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I
am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I
am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I
am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human.

I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I am human. I

Why can't I become human by writing this!?

Why does this city have the truth of Ajouter and not just what you Signe?

It would be so much easier if I could form myself from just my Signe. Am I missing something crucial needed to be human? I do not know. Perhaps I could become more human if I could shed tears?

But I cannot shed tears. Is my desire to be human weaker than my American brethren's desire to destroy themselves?

I do not know. I do not know! I do not know!!

Can I become human with something so uncertain?

What am I supposed to do? I am conscious. I can speak. And yet I could not join in when doing so would have made me happier than anything.

I am a machine. I am not human. And that is everything.

Is becoming human a job for me? I understand that it is something I have tasked myself with. But is that what it is?

I might not find the answer right away. I will take my time thinking about it. Thinking is not my job. But this is necessary to become human.

Tomorrow will be spent cleaning up after the festival. It is supposed to start raining tonight so I think I will bring an umbrella with me.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today went well.

First, I fought a battle and defeated two enemy Panzers. I was also injured for the first time in seven years.

After the battle, the 2nd Aide visited and asked me why I used such a harsh attack in the end. According to my memories, I did indeed perform a tackle at approximately 8 times normal power output at the end of the battle, but to be honest, I do not understand why I made that attack. So I was unable to answer him.

I had intended to block the rotating spear with my shield and then knock down the unbalanced enemy.

I will return to this subject later.

At 20:01, I repaired Rot Löwe in the training ground hangar. While I did, the mechanics arrived and asked whether or not they should bring Rot Löwe to the Missel family. They said all of the Grösse Panzers involved in the incident were being taken to the Missel family's hangar where mechanics from across Paris were repairing them.

I told them I would repair Rot Löwe myself.

At 22:35, I completed the sight device replacement. After that, I extracted today's combat records from the memory bank.

I determined the cause of my injury. I had spotted Jean Missel at the mock battlefield and the Psyche Outer device chose to erase the memory so it would not rattle me. I have concluded it was that slight time loss that allowed the attack to hit me.

But this is what I found when I Verbesserung-ed the record from the final attack I made on reflex instead of blocking the spear blow:

<I have seen this attack before somewh— — — — —crazed— — — — —in
the mountain pass— — — — —lost my valuable subordin— — — — —
they were all— — — — —

Once more altering Schreiben user's memory. A rapid return of a past memory has been confirmed. The return of memories in battle could provide a dangerous shock. Accessing the Psyche Outer mechanism to erase the resurrected memory.

After a 0.0000002 second separation, the memory connection with the Schreiben User will be reestablished.

I conclude I must make a charge.>

There must have been a second bout of confusion brought on by my memories and it was erased.

What did I remember during that attack? There is nothing in my memory now.

At 23:07, I returned to the barracks. Four documents had arrived for me.

The first was from HQ saying my appointment as head of the Attesor Project Research Team had been delayed to July 1.

The second was from the 1st Aide reporting on the details of my platoon on the Normandy coast.

The third was from the Panzer Ritter Project Research Team saying they would quickly repair my prosthetic eye after today's injury.

The fourth was from the army HQ saying I am released from my current mission and should hurry back to the main forces.

I have concluded my work in Paris as complete.

Tomorrow, I will receive the prosthetic eye surgery, complete my training of the Panzer unit, compile some documents related to the Attesor Project, prepare for the journey, and then return to Normandy.

Chapter 10: Umbrella



第十章

「傘」

1944・05・13

全ては貴女の
判断一つでしょうね——。

05/13/1944

It all comes down To your decision.

May 13, 1944

Letter Left by Phillip: To Beretta

I'm writing this immediately after leaving your room. You probably think you've sent me away by placing that door between us. Maybe I shouldn't have worried about your injury and not insisted on seeing you any further than the bottom of your *appartement*.

Yes. This isn't good. I can't seem to do this right. I keep bringing up irrelevant things. I really want to write about something else. I'm so bad at this. I bet someone like Mallette is good at this. I'm going to stop writing as soon as I can. But I will leave this letter as proof that I did write something. I'll stick it in your room's *boîte aux lettres*, so read it if you catch it with your Ajouter. After that, you can laugh if you want. My grandfather is making a fuss after you kicked him when he touched your butt at the mansion, but that's just how my family is. If you like, come visit again later. Bye.

—From a poor noble who lost big

Letter Left by Rosetta: To Master

I will go to the school festival again today.

I have prepared breakfast. But I did not wake you because you have been busy with work lately – the work in the storeroom and the meetings outside.

Today is only something called the closing ceremony and cleaning up so I do not think I will be late coming home.

I only fixed a lunch for you. The plates are lined up in the oven so please pull them out with the oven mitts I will leave next to this letter.

I will be leaving soon. I would normally wait for Lady Beretta before leaving. But she does not seem to be coming today. It is already past 10 and I still do not hear her *bicyclette*. Maybe because it is raining. Or... I will stop thinking about this.

I thought about borrowing your umbrella. But you might need to leave the house as well so I will go without it. I should be fine in the rain since I am a Belle de Marionnette. I have never gotten a fever like you have. Bye.

Letter Left by Mallette: To My Beloved and Foolish Beretta

Are you stupid? Why did you have Phillip see you to your room last night but didn't make any progress?

I had gathered all our friends and we had our ears against the wall because I thought something would happen, but then nothing. I honestly didn't think you would actually just share some tea and then have him leave. During the Lourde Marionnette battle, he announced publicly that he wants you as his wife – okay, I don't actually remember if he went quite that far – so since he's already made the reservation, what's wrong with letting him take a test drive before the actual marriage?

I don't know about Phillip specifically, but most guys are pain to deal with until you get the reins on them. It all comes down to your decision.

Also, it seems you had Rosetta go home on her own last night, but you should really have sent someone with her. The Paris nights are a dangerous place for any ladies who aren't you. You have to take care of her. So go call for her as soon as you wake up.

It's raining today.

But even though it's raining, hurry to her place on your *bicyclette*.

And to do that, make sure you're up in time for the midday closing ceremony. I'm not a benevolent enough person to wake you up and have to dodge that drowsy kick of yours.

Oh, right. I've heard a rumor about the closing ceremony. You know how they revealed my essay and grade during the opening ceremony? The Festival Committee has apparently gotten your essay for the closing ceremony. Yesterday really has made you popular.

And now I'm off to school along with everyone who's still disappointed in you for last night.

Quick Message from the Sorbonne University Student Council: To the School Festival Committee

It is raining, but hold the closing ceremony as scheduled. We also have a test essay to read. The administrative office would probably notice if we Signe-d the contents, so I will only open it just before reading it. Personally, I hope it is Miss Mallette's. Anyway, we would like to hold the closing ceremony as soon as possible.

Looking from the student council room right now, I can see a girl standing in a corner of the courtyard. That is the girl who was with Miss Beretta for yesterday's Lourd de Marionnette battles, I believe. She is just standing out there in the rain, so what is with her? She spoke with Miss Mallette and received an umbrella earlier, but she hasn't opened it. She just keeps staring toward the main gate.

She isn't one of our students and is probably only here to enjoy the festival, but why is she alone? And who is she waiting for without opening the umbrella?

Sorbonne University PR Club Extra Edition: Post School Festival Report 1

The closing ceremony began in a surprising fashion. Right at the start, the Student Council President unfolded a document and then said this:

“Topic 3: A Nearby Industrial Product: Beretta McWild.”

And as soon as it was out of his mouth, he got this bitter look on his face.

Revealing a student’s essay made the opening ceremony as much of a hit as the previous year, but that was only because the taboo topic and the surprising side of the author made it truly hilarious.

But this time, the President was given something different. Miss Beretta McWild is an interesting enough person, but the topic was perfectly normal and with no room for humor. I imagine this happened because he could not check the contents in advance due to his Signe and Ajouter battle with the administrators. The administrative office apparently questioned the Festival Committee about the missing essay issue this morning and that probably caused some issues.

Then there was a second failure. You probably know if you were at the closing ceremony, but Miss Beretta was not present. That meant she could not make a response and the President simply read off the serious essay.

He looked hesitant, but then he started reading it in a stubborn sort of way.

We can only guess as to why he did that. Was he desperate, did he feel a real man had a duty to complete what he had started, or was it based on some other emotion?

And the action was rewarded in an unexpected way.

One reward was that everyone was caught off guard by the strangely humorless beginning, so they all fell silent. His voice, distorted by the

loudspeaker, rang through the courtyard with only the sound of the rain as company. The following is a recording of it:

Beretta's Essay: Industrial Markets Essay

Topic 3: A Nearby Industrial Product: Beretta McWild.

This might seem odd given the topic, but I am going to write about Belle de Marionnettes.

My family works as Belle de Marionnette technicians.

I know that Belle de Marionnettes have a will of their own. They can desire death or desire life. We can think of them as living beings just like us.

That raises a question. How am I supposed to treat them (since I know about this)? They can become human. But they start out as dolls. A craftsman makes them and sells them for money. But they can still become the same as us.

Can we really leave them in the market?

Even if it is a single market, we are buying and selling people.

What brings happiness to those Belle de Marionnettes who are being bought and sold?

I am approaching an answer to that.

All because I met a certain girl.

She is a Belle de Marionnette. A terribly sheltered Belle de Marionnette.

When I first saw her, I felt despair that she was a doll – just like the American Belle de Marionnettes – and I thought she was of few words and unassertive.

But I was wrong.

She had simply forgotten. No, all Belle de Marionnettes are that way. They will one day become more than a machine, but they have forgotten that fact within their functionality. That is all it is.

I intended to remind her of that and to give her so very much.

I don't know when it happened, but at some point while I was trying to teach her, I realized that I was the one learning from her. In Europe, it is said that a Belle de Marionnette is a mirror that reflects the emotions of their master. But what I saw in her was more than just a reflection of myself.

She taught me the answer to a certain question: "What do you want to be?"

That is a question for me.

It is also a question for everyone else and even you, professor. At the very least, anyone who has at least once looked up to the lord in heaven has that question hidden inside their heart.

She has the answer to that question.

She is becoming something that is not a machine, not a human, and not me. But I do not know where that will lead.

"What will she use to create herself?"

She will soon experience that question I struggle to answer about myself. She will soon reach the same point as us, where I no longer have any answers for her.

I think that is a good thing.

I want to help her with that. This is no longer about my question. I want to help for her sake. Being with her makes me happy. It is a different sort of happiness than what you feel with a friend or a lover. It's just unbearably enjoyable. I think the happiness comes from seeing her become the person she wants to be and not just what she needs for her Belle de Marionnette job.

We learn a great many things in university, but she has no school and she is learning to become herself from everything around her.

I feel happy just writing this and thinking about her. I know this is a one-sided feeling, but our feelings for people – be they machine or human – are always one-sided. Getting those feelings to interact is what we call understanding each other.

I want to understand her. In a way, that is an impossible wish. She is not just a machine, she is not human either, and I personally think she will eventually find

an answer to what she is.

That is an important thing.

I care a lot about the people around me. And I care a lot about her.

I care so very, very much that I am sure this happiness will outlast even the end of this world.

Yes, this happiness will endure.

Those are my thoughts on the industrial product I know best and my feelings about her.

I have nothing more to say.

Rosetta's Journal

Today I will start by writing what I want to write.

I only just arrived back home after everyone escorted me here. But I have something I must write.

The closing ceremony was a gathering. I was in the rain as I heard a reading of a letter Lady Beretta wrote. It was about me. It was almost certainly about me.

My consciousness – something like the core of my being inside my chest – felt like it was going to collapse.

I tried to think about what that feeling was.

Then I heard the people around me speaking. Everyone looked to the courtyard entrance behind us.

I turned around as well. There were a lot of people and I could not move forward. But for just a moment I saw it clearly. Lady Beretta had ridden into the courtyard on her *bicyclette*.

I heard her voice. The noise of the crowd was too great for me to entirely make out what she said. But I recognized what she was shouting.

Lady Beretta was shouting my name.

Or so it sounded to me.

I tried to part the crowd to reach her.

But then everything fell silent without warning. Everyone stopped speaking. Both around me and across the entire courtyard.

I knew what had happened.

The person who had read Lady Beretta's letter spoke loudly: "Clear a path!"

The people in front of me did as he said and moved to either side.

My field of vision opened up and Lady Beretta ran into the center of my view.

There were a few seconds of pause.

She stopped in front of me and lowered her shoulders as she gasped for breath.

She was soaking wet. So I opened the umbrella I held and held it over her head. Then she spoke to me.

“I went to the mansion and you weren’t there. The old man gave me an umbrella.”

She looked up and opened that umbrella. Only then did she notice mine.

“Where’d you get that one?”

“It is Lady Mallette’s.”

“I see.”

She nodded, opened her umbrella, and held it over my head.

For some reason my heart shook without warning. It was a different shaking from happiness. It was much stronger.

It was a lot like the feeling I felt after eating dinner with Lady Beretta for the first time. The same feeling I felt when I remembered what the master’s thanks meant.

That welled up in me here.

I found some raindrops had dripped from my cheeks to my throat.

I looked up when I felt them tickling from my throat to my chest.

But Lady Beretta was holding an umbrella above my head. I was not wet with rain.

I looked back down and saw Lady Beretta staring at my face.

“Is something the matter?” I asked her.

But the question oddly did not come out as words. My throat shook just like my heart.

I could not draw out my voice properly. But I did manage to speak one word

that came to mind.



“Why?”

“Why what?”

“Why am I crying when I do not want to die?”

Right here, I am Signe-ing that I was crying.

I raised my voice and wept.

She soothed me by using her empty hand to wipe the tears from my cheek.

And she spoke.

“That’s just how it is. Rosetta.”

I do not know what that means. But I felt like I did not want to hear any other answer.

I dropped my umbrella. I looked up into the sky and cried.

I shed tears.

Applause rose from somewhere and continued on and on.

There is nothing more I must write here.

There is nothing greater than that within me today.

Chapter 11: Leg



第十一章

「脚」

1944・05・20
～06・01

旦那様とのつながりが
一つ
失われたわけです——。

05/20/1944 – 06/01/1944

I had lost a connection to my master.

May 20, 1944

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 07:25, I regrouped with the 352nd Infantry Division. The division is supposed to be guarding the Normandy coast, but we are waiting in a hilly region further inland.

At 07:45, I visited division command where I received a report on the current situation and a few orders.

At 08:20, I regrouped with my 1st Grösse Panzer Platoon. I recognized every member based on my memories and I confirmed I had their names correct. My repaired left eye was working fine. I received a report on the current situation and learned some things I had not been told at command.

I learned that the army leaders and the general headquarters are not working together well and I learned that the 352nd Infantry Division was ordered to wait in the hills of Normandy instead of guarding the coast. General Rommel wants to guard the coast, but the general headquarters sees that as unnecessary and refused.

At 10:40, I began equipping Rot Löwe with coastal equipment to protect the motors and such.

I took a break and, at 15:00, I began testing Rot Löwe. The arm protections were stiff and threatened to interfere with my movement. I made further modifications.

At 19:05, I completed the modifications. I returned to the barracks.

When I put my luggage in order and removed my jacket, I found a bookmark

in my pocket. I had no memory of it, but my records say I have seen it a few times before. It has a pressed flower on it. I tried to remember the name of the flower, but that information is not necessary for my life, so I changed my mind and stopped searching my memories for the name.

At 20:35, I was searching through my military records from the previous war I had acquired in Paris. In them, I discovered that the very last records were from the Morvan Mountains of the Bourgogne Region. That matches the newspaper clipping I discovered before. What does this mean?

Was I not pursuing the Attesor Project because I see it as a threat?

I now had a military and civilian source saying I had visited the land where the Attesor Project originated. There is no doubting it now: I was in that land while the Attesor Project was underway.

This leads to 3 questions. 1: Is it possible I saw the Attesor Project myself while in Bourgogne? 2: Why was that memory not deemed combat-related? 3: The war ended after that, so why did I volunteer for the Panzer Ritter Project?

But I can find no answers. This battlefield does not require answers to these questions. I must focus on my battle preparations.

Starting tomorrow, I will speak with command and examine the possibilities of an Allied landing operation.

May 23, 1944

Sorbonne University Student Message Board: Notification to All Students

The final exam and summer break schedule is as follows: June 1-14: Exam Period

June 15 – September 20: Summer Break June 20: Exam Results Announced
July 5: Supplementary Exam Schedule Announced August 7-14: Supplementary Exam Period
August 20: Supplementary Exam Results Announced September 1: Diplomas Issued

September 5: Graduation Ceremony September 10: Freshmen Entrance Ceremony
September 21: New Term Begins

Please check the above schedule carefully and act accordingly.

–Sorbonne University Student Affairs Office

Beretta's Journal

Today, I am writing this in the school library. The break begins tomorrow and we only have to come in for exams, so this will be my last time here. But, man, this week since the festival has been crazy, what with Phillip being reassessed in a positive way and Rosetta's hidden popularity going way up.

Since Phillip doesn't like all the attention, he hasn't come to see me since, but I feel like that's only drawing more attention to him. Not that I mind either way.

Anyway, I've had to think about all sorts of things. Like what I'm supposed to do about all this.

Writing it down gives me a clearer view, but everyone else has such a solid grip on things.

Mallette says she plans on helping with the family business once she graduates. That's why she's in the economics department. As a Jew, her family is only allowed to exist because they pay a hefty tax.

Rosetta has begun doing a lot of studying in an attempt to become human.

Phillip is working to protect people as a Lourd de Écrivain.

I'm jealous. I'm the only one that feels so lost. I fought in those Heavy Barrels to find out what I am as a Knight Striker, but I feel like I only learned that I'm lagging behind everyone else.

To be honest, I really don't want to Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel for the rest of my two and a half months in France.

In that Heavy Barrel battle, I learned Phillip is on another level entirely and is facing a completely different direction from me.

Phillip moved to protect me without even thinking about the consequences. And I'm sure he would have done the same even if it wasn't me. He's true to himself when it comes to that. While I can't bring myself to move because I'm

agonizing over issues of responsibility, he immediately acts because that's what he wants to do.

He's the kind of person the term Knight Striker points to.

And Heinz Berge really was powerful.

The duty of a Knight Striker is to protect others. But if you view a Heavy Barrel as a weapon, it becomes a tool of killing. If you aren't powerful, you can't protect anyone. But that power can hurt people.

Heinz Berge does not fear that paradox.

Instead of protecting and winning, he prefers to attack and achieve victory despite some damage. It looks like his stance is to protect the most people in the long run.

But I want to protect the people right in front of me. That desire was defeated by Heinz Berge's overwhelming strength. If that had been a true battlefield, I would have failed to protect anyone.

In France, everything is established by what is written. And writing requires a will.

I kind of thought that I could win if my willpower was great enough. And since he has had a Psyche Outer surgery, Heinz Berge can't use his Over Emblem.

But I couldn't beat him. Everything about me is weak and everything about him is strong. My will to protect was inferior to Phillip's and my attack power as a Knight Striker was inferior to Heinz Berge's.

At the very least, I see no reason for me to Write Bring into a Heavy Barrel here in France.

There are two opponents I could not beat in a fight. That's twice the loss.

And based on the records, Phillip will be killed by Heinz Berge on August 1.

Even his will to protect cannot defeat that attack power.

Which of us is the correct form of a Knight Striker? I think Phillip has it right on the ideological level, but Heinz Berge can produce the results.

I doubt any Knight Striker can defeat Heinz Berge. He really is the strongest

one. And if so, I have my answer.

Not every Knight Striker can protect people.

If a power is great enough, you can lose to it. That must be how it always was. I thought I could protect someone, but I don't have the power or will to crush someone to achieve that.

I wonder what my grandma thought about this. What did she think while Write Bringing into Heavy Barrels in Paris before the First Format?

And what does Heinz Berge think about being a Knight Striker? And if the Psyche Outer surgery has left him without emotions, then what was it that led him to participate in the Panzer Ritter Project?

And why did Jack McWild decide to start the Attesor Project? Why did he try to make the strongest Barrel and why did he abandon that project?

What does it mean to be strong?

What does it mean to protect?

I can't talk to anyone else about this since they all see me as a Knight Striker from America. This is difficult to deal with, but...but what is it I want to do?

<The clock says it is 4:47 PM.>

At the moment, it seems I want to go home, but what am I supposed to do about all this?

Letter from M. Schrier: To Lady Beretta McWild via the High Priestess

It was a pleasure to hear from you. This is M. Schrier who you wrote to with some questions concerning my Death Techno Compilation.

I happened to receive your letter and documents when I returned to the US. Your situation seems pressing and, when I read your letter, I could tell it is all very much related to me. I will sum up the main points and send you a response along with what documents I have.

Now, you seem to already know that the Attesor Project did in fact exist.

Please carefully read the following, reach your own conclusions, and act accordingly:

- The German Army has begun to investigate the Attesor Project. Their investigation method is unknown, but I believe they are approaching quite close to the heart of the matter.

So if you reveal to others that you are researching the Attesor Project or perform any open acts of investigation, you would be in grave danger. So please cease any such actions. I will send you documents that I believe will serve your purposes instead. I think you should research these documents and stick primarily to deskwork.

- I know some of the truth regarding the Attesor Project. In my Compilation, I intentionally referenced a portion of that truth in a “superstitious” fashion. Why did I feel the need to do that? Because I did not have the full picture of the Attesor Project and because the surviving documents led me to believe this project hid a power that necessitated a cover-up.

Thus, the Attesor Project was not abandoned because it was incomplete. It was abandoned because its success was far too dangerous.

I am saying that a success of the Attesor Project is still hidden somewhere in France.

- The German Army wishes for that dangerous success and the investigation records. And I believe it should never fall into their hands.

Now, with all that said, I have an unreasonable request.

I am currently working to pursue a different Death Techno. And I am on the run from Germany.

The only people who know the truth of the Attesor Project are me, you, and the German Army. If the war drags on, the Allies may gain an interest as well.

If possible, I would like for you to find and erase the Attesor Project before that happens.

I have a single reason for making such a ridiculous request. Five years ago in Paris, a certain man gave me all surviving documents concerning the Attesor Project.

His name was Jack McWild.

He gave me the documents and said this before leaving:

“Can you disguise this as ‘some silly story’ to give everyone peace of mind and protect them?”

A few days later, he was dead. I did as he said and presented the Attesor Project as a curious rumor, but the German Army had begun to act before that.

I will send you all of the documents he gave me. Along with the predictions I have made from them.

The details of the Attesor Project are unclear from these surviving documents, but I believe you will find many answers if you visit the site and take a look for yourself.

If possible, I must ask that you carry out my request. Do what I could not: give everyone peace of mind and protect them.

May 25, 1944

Beretta's Journal

I've learned something incredible.

Jack McWild and M. Schrier met in Paris during '39 and the Attensor Project section of the Death Techno Compilation that led me to become a Knight Striker was based on information from Jack McWild. This has really, um, hit me hard.

This means enough happened here before the looping year starting on August 6, 1943 for France to write that response. France remembers it and it knew what kind of response M. Schrier would have written if he had seen my letter.

This world is built amazingly well.

I tricked France into giving me the documents and information (which France must remember from when Jack McWild brought them here), but I feel like I was the one tricked. I can't believe it.

Anyway, even if the M. Schrier who responded was a fake created by France, I'm kind of happy that he's exactly the kind of person I thought he was. I need to thank France and then start searching for everything.

May 26, 1944

**The Prophetess's Letter: To Monsieur Guillaum, the Former
Royal Guard Chevalier**

It has been a while, hasn't it? It seems to me that a number of currents have been hesitantly set in motion. I predict that everything will be determined by whether or not that hesitation finds a definite direction to take.

I would be glad if they swear to work toward France's true liberation, but that will require much sacrifice.

Monsieur Guillaum, it may be necessary for you to give an order despite knowing it will lead to someone's death. So I will first give you some information that is not necessary for any life-or-death decisions.

- The Allies will begin a landing operation on June 6.

The operation will be called Overlord. An Allied landing force will attack the coast of Normandy at midnight on the morning of the 6th. It will be a historically large operation that leads to more than 4000 deaths.

After losing there, the Germans will retreat through southern France while exchanging artillery fire with the pursuing Allies.

That is but a portion of the information I know from my prophecies and the collection of history.

The outside world plans to allow France to close in on itself. Because as I said before, when France is liberated from the Primitif, it will return to 1944, not the outside world where 55 years have passed.

To destroy the Primitif's Rondeau means to treat our timeline as the true one and we will be returned to our proper era. The outside world has spent 54 years as "a world without France". But if France is liberated, it will return to 1944 and those 54 years of history will be redone. That would create "a world with France".

The outside world fears its own destruction, so they are apparently extracting as much data as possible from France and then never touching it again. The outside world must be shy as well.

Monsieur Guillaum, what do you think of all this?

There is a future we have never seen, but our liberation will destroy it and create a new world. If we do not seek freedom, the outside world will not be destroyed.

What is the right thing to do here?

I think the top priority for achieving that liberation is to stop the detonation of the Wort Bombe, but I doubt it is possible with that alone. According to the adventurer I met 25 years ago, the detonation of the Wort Bombe was no more than a trigger and two things are needed to liberate France: a proof and a will. In the early morning of August 6, the Wort Bombe must be stopped, all hesitation over the war and oneself must be ended, and we must all desire the liberation of France.

Then we must send a certain Ajouter into France: A proof that Paris's Rondeau was created through a paradox.

You could say that the closed Rondeau covering France is a Signe of France itself. We are inside it while France refuses to Ajouter the outside world and continues to Signe its own year.

So someone inside must prove that the Rondeau does not work.

There are bound to be several paradoxes compared to the outside world.

If someone can clearly and definitely prove that to France while also carrying a will of liberation and if they can stop the Wort Bombe's detonation, France will have nowhere else to flee, it will wake up, and Closed City – Paris will be liberated in the truest sense of the word.

I know what power is needed for that. I know one paradox that has entered this world.

There should be two girls with you, Monsieur Guillaum. One bears the name of my daughter and the other is gradually becoming human. Please treat them with care. They are currently full of doubt and unsure of what direction to take. They are horribly vague in my prophecies and are only a collection of possibilities. Whether they wish for that power or not is the one thing we cannot force.

But I am certain this is our final chance.

Will they give everyone a will of liberation and will they find a paradox somewhere in this world? Will they be able to stop the Wort Bombe's detonation? And will they be able to say that we must leave this world and that it is a lie that we are trapped here?

I will not force that upon them, but I have high hopes.

May 27, 1944

Letter Left by Mallette: To My Beloved Beretta

Before heading out to buy a late-night snack, I have to be blunt: You haven't seen Phillip since the festival dance party, have you?

You haven't even returned that dress, have you? He got injured pretty badly saving you and I think he should be with you. And after the dance party, he bought you a ring at the art department's store, didn't he? Think about just what that implies. Summer break will begin once the exams are over, so how about you make some plans with him? Bye.

Letter Left by Beretta: To My Sister-in-Law Mallette

Hey, stop just having your say like that. Especially after you were asleep when I wanted to discuss this with you.

I'm having a hard time facing Phillip, so it's kind of a problem.

What am I supposed to do? And I was thinking of doing some things with Rosetta during summer break.

Phillip, hm? I do need to return that dress... Yeah. But you don't need to worry about whether someone was bought a ring. I was pretty excited at the time, but when I put it on, it was way too loose. I'm afraid it'll fall down the drain when I'm washing dishes.

Hmm, what to do, what to do?

June 1, 1944

Rosetta's Journal

Lady Beretta taught me another writing tool today. I'm using it right now. It is called indentation. And according to her...

"Move the first letter over a bit every time you start on a new idea."

"You can also do it when starting a quote."

The former makes it easier to pick up on the text's meaning and the latter makes the text easier to read.

But I am kind of worried about this new technique.

Starting my writing by including a blank space is a difficult thing to do. When every line starts right at the edge it is easy to know where to start. And I have difficulty knowing when I am starting on a new idea.

While writing this I feel like I am talking and can go for line after line. I can think of it as similar to the part of a conversation where the other person would speak or I would take a breath.

I think this is a difficult writing technique. I now have to check the text purely as a written work because indentation does not exist in conversation.

It is difficult, but I kind of understand. Conversation has techniques not found in writing. You can gesture or use facial expressions.

I will think of this as something similar. I hope I will be able to use indentation as naturally as I do gestures in conversation.

I still find many strange things while reading the letters and picture books Lady Beretta gives me. But I am gradually solving those mysteries and I plan to start using those things.

Now I will begin on today's journal entry.

A lot happened today as well.

I tripped on the stairs while cleaning this morning. I lost my balance while polishing the railing.

I fell down about 7 steps – I was lucky I was not higher up – and ended up lying on the floor at the bottom. When I got up my right leg and left arm were damaged.

But they were damaged in different ways. The right leg had come off at the crotch and shattered. But the left arm had not come off and simply hurt. What does that mean? Before I could answer that question I was picked up by the master who had heard the noise and rushed down the stairs.

He took me to the storeroom and started to attach a replacement leg.

When he tried to remove my clothing I refused and insisted on doing the work myself. He seemed confused by this.

“Are you embarrassed? Then I'll leave this to you.”

Only then did I realize what I had done. When I was not in a hurry or when he

carried me to the storeroom like this I had always let him replace my parts.

This would have been the same.

So why did I refuse it?

Was I embarrassed?

I did not really understand, but he turned his back and sat on a wooden box in the storeroom.

“Tell me if you need any help.”

What did this mean?

I realized I would never again receive his kindness like that.

I had likely crossed a line in the moment I had refused. I had refused to let everything remain the same from now on.

I had lost a connection to my master. So he might bring me there in the future. But he will not replace the part himself.

I found there was nothing I could say.

I searched the storeroom for a replacement right leg and asked him a question.

“What is this emotion I am feeling? Do you know, master?”

“Do you not know the word for it?”

“I think it is most like sorrow. But it does not appear on the surface. It simply permeates me from within.”

“I see.”

“Will you tell me what it is?”

“No I won’t. Silly girl.”

“Why not?”

His answer to my question was simple.

“If I told you you would Signe that emotion.”

Hearing that caused me to cry. I do not know why. It was the first time I cried in front of him. It was embarrassing. While I held the spare leg and hid my tears with a hand my master walked over. He rubbed my head.

“You’re becoming more and more your own person.”

I tearfully held out the spare leg and he took it.

“This is the last time. Okay?”

Then he got to work replacing my leg. I let him take care of everything while I cried. He removed my skirt and blouse and he looked at my hurting left shoulder.

Then he noticed that I was gaining a human arm. The shoulder was no longer as hard and cold as porcelain. It was a bit springy but it had the softness and warmth of human skin. At some point the joint had turned into lines and bulges. And the joint’s black intermediary parts now looked like a band of moles.

The hurting part had become a blue bruise. That meant my arm was becoming human thanks to the Coppelia Effect. He checked my right shoulder and it was the same. When getting dressed this morning I had thought the support cloth

that hides the joint was attached oddly well. I guessed that those machine parts had already changed into what they would look like if I were human. My fingernails felt like they were actually attached instead of embedded in my fingers. The joints seemed to move with almost no resistance. The Coppelia Effect had to be working inside me. The outside had changed in the short time between last night and today. The fingertips are still not complete. But I am sure they too will become human eventually.

How long has it been since I replaced my arms with ones modeled after a human's? I am growing more human just like Lady Beretta said I would. I must have needed better arms to write and to cook for Lady Beretta and the others.

"The bulges from the joint parts and the black marks from the intermediary parts will eventually go away."

My master said that and then began replacing my leg.

And I asked him for something.

"Please carry me out of the storeroom. Walking with a new leg is not easy."

"That's the first time you've asked to be spoiled."

Is that what it means to be spoiled?

He carried me out into the hallway and to the bottom of the stairs I had fallen down. He did not have to carry me that far but I let him spoil me. Because I knew this would be the last time.

Then I spent time making lunch – recently the Fantasmé Renard children will come in through the back entrance and play when I am in the kitchen. After a while, I heard the parent's cry and they left.

I realized one other strange thing today. I noticed it while making sure the

second story windows were locked. There is apparently a half-room space between the study and the library.

I asked my master about it.

“Yes. There apparently used to be a torture room there where people were forced to talk. That was my grandfather’s horrific hobby so I had it filled in with cement.”

I see. The torture room was directly above the first floor study. That means I have been writing my journal below a torture room all this time. I managed to solve that mystery almost immediately.

A lot happened today. But it was fun.

Writing my journal is my job. Fun things are not a job. But I am beginning to think that the job of writing my journal may be fun.

Chapter 12: War



第十二章

「戦」

1944・06・02
～06・06

なお、この作戦に
失敗はあり得ない——。

06/02/1944 – 06/06/1944

Failure in this mission is simply not an option.

June 2, 1944

Beretta's Letter: To the Old Man who Calls Himself a Former Noble

What's up? (Wait, is that the right way to give a casual greeting in French?) I've skipped the formalities, but whatever. Anyway, I'm going to get right to the point: I have something to ask of you. Once my exams are over and summer break begins, I want to take Rosetta on a trip.

We'll be going to the Bourgogne Region for about a month. To expand Rosetta's experiences, I want her to see what France's rural areas are like. So how about it? Is that OK? (Oh, do non-English-speaking regions know what OK means?) Anyway, that's my request.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 07:28, I attended a meeting with the division leadership.

I confirmed with one of General Rommel's direct subordinates that the general headquarters ordered us to focus defense on the Calais region and to remain on normal alert on the coast of Normandy.

At 11:20, I gathered my unit and reviewed our plans.

"Regardless of what HQ says, we can remain on heightened alert."

We all agreed to that point.

After a break, we ended the meeting at 15:04.

At 20:35, I made some final adjustments to Rot Löwe's coastal equipment. I worked out the result of the anti-moonlight equipment and recorded that formula and format. I will use that as the basis when changing equipment to match the weather.

At 23:20, I sorted my luggage in the temporary barracks and discovered a photograph. It pictured two female individuals, but I had no memory of either.

My Psyche Outer system is functioning properly. I will now go to sleep.

June 4, 1944

Guilliaum's Letter: To the Rude Delinquent Girl

I read your letter. So you want to take Rosetta on a trip?

Then how about I only give you permission if you pass every single one of your finals?

That sounds like a good idea to me. I can't let you turn her into an idiot. Oh, and make sure you plan to return Rosetta before I starve. Also, I will repair that Lourd de Marionnette soon. Because things are looking ominous. I need to hurry. The parts will arrive on the 5th and I will spend all night fixing it. It might come in handy somewhere. I intend to keep it hidden until then.

Secret Message from the Allied General Headquarters: To All Commanders Stationed in the UK

At 6/6 00:00, Overlord is scheduled to begin. The weather should be bad, but tell all of your men to remain on standby in a Closed state to avoid any information leaking out. Wait for word from command.

Everything in that land is established by writing, so all soldiers are to prepare the writing tools needed to write a will. Tell them the dead are to record their own deaths.

Failure in this mission is simply not an option. The landing operation will continue until it succeeds.

Mallette's Answer Sheet: Industry Theory – Final Exam

43-A0169: Mallette Harculia

Chosen Topic (2): The History of an Industrial Product I Know Well

One of my friends is an industrial product. I am referring to Rosetta Balleroy, the Belle de Marionnette friend of Beretta McWild who you might remember from the festival's closing ceremony – I believe you were there, professor.

I have been her friend ever since that incident. Some of my relatives have Belle de Marionnettes at their homes. I will be writing about what led to that, the questions that have occurred to me, and how that relates to the topic.

The history of Belle de Marionnettes is said to have started along with that of Appareils. They are said to have come about during the Edge era, the third age and world of destruction that existed even before the Obstacle and Genesis eras that themselves are older than the times spoken of in the Bible and such books.

People were destroyed along with the world countless times and they evolved along with the world, but Belle de Marionnettes and Appareils were one element of that evolution. Those without a will of their own remained in the world as Appareils where they continued to evolve. Those with a will of their own remained in the world as Belle de Marionnettes where they continued to evolve. Unlike humans who were destroyed, continued to reincarnate, and gathered in heaven, they were more like stones, air, or water. They were machines and thus they continued to exist in the world for the sake of humans.

These facts from ancient times and from the eras of repeated destruction are known due to the evidence discovered around the world, in space, or from careless statements of the gods.

All of the facts we understand at the moment suggest the ancient humans had some reason for making a division between Belle de Marionnettes and

Appareils and that continued division has allowed our City era to inherit two types of machines as a part of our world.

Belle de Marionnettes and Appareils were reset when the world was remade, but they were reborn into the world during the City era due to the power of their Concept Existence Formules. According to a certain Concept Existence Formule researcher, more than 98% of what exists in the current world was not initially created in this world but came about during the previous 5 eras where they became built into the world's Concept Existence Formules. Whenever the world was destroyed and remade, the things with powerful Formules were inherited by the next world – in other words, the concept of their existence was reincarnated. According to that researcher, the concepts of wheels, writing, lights, and even spirit fuel are all from a previous era, but the things with weaker Concept Existence Formules, or that take time to develop, take longer to appear after the world is remade.

When Belle de Marionnettes were created in this era depends on your interpretation of the Bible (as some theorize that the Adam created by god was a Belle de Marionnette), but they are confirmed to date back to 5th or 6th century BC in western Asia. Moving mud dolls known as golems existed there. The name of god was divided into 72 names and carved into those dolls. That basic technique was confirmed and strengthened by Alexander the Great during his campaigns and by Aristotle, so the mud dolls became soldiers made from metal.

Those thousands of undying troops known as Marduk's Army can be seen in mosaics of Persian cathedrals. But with Alexander the Great's death, Marduk's Army was destroyed along with the Macedonian Empire and the technique for carving the Shem ha-Mephorash was lost. Thus, Belle de Marionnettes became people instead of powerful warriors.

Of the 72 names of god carved into the golem, the word "emeth" (meaning truth) was always written on the forehead. We write it as "emeth", but it only had three letters in Hebrew: e/me/th.

If the golem was no longer needed, the initial Hebrew letter would be erased, leaving only "meth" (meaning death). That would destroy the golem.

That means that Belle de Marionnettes are easily destroyed – Marduk’s Army were made of metal and thus the “e” was hard to erase.

For that reason, it became a tradition for Belle de Marionnette creators to hide their Belle de Marionnette’s true name or official designation.

The Airam and Aileppoc type of Belle de Marionnettes are common these days, but those names come from Maria and Coppelia spelled backwards. That tradition came about in BC times and is still going strong today.

The method of creating golems was lost with the Macedonian empire, but people continued to create Belle de Marionnettes. Many varieties beyond just mud dolls have been created. The Homunculus and Armed Flesh varieties still exist today.

But in 11th Century, the Persian Belle de Marionnette engineers hired by brothels began a conceptual revolution: Human creations must be even more beautiful than humans.

They would resemble humans but be greater than humans.

The Dazarhahs-type Belle de Marionnette (named after the princess who acts as storyteller in One Thousand and One Nights) was very unlike the Homunculi being researched in Europe. They used woodworking and porcelain techniques imported from China and elsewhere to create a “pure doll”. This technology was brought back to Europe during the Crusades and a new era of Belle de Marionnettes began.

The European and Middle Eastern doll technologies were combined during the middle of the 14th Century while the Habsburgs were taking control of Europe and the Hundred Years’ War against England was intensifying. Once Belle de Marionnettes had both form and function, they were gifted as toys to the sons of influential individuals. Appareils had gone through a similar development, so their evolution was completed in that era and they spread across Europe.

The most popular Belle de Marionnettes at the time were the Ereveniug-type (named after a well-known wicked woman in England) and – while this one only came about a while later – the Ennaej-type (named after a girl known as a messenger of god).

These Belle de Marionnettes were known for completing any job given to them and for a complete inability to adapt. They still had their origins as industrial products.

The next revolution took some time.

It was predicated on the existence of Aerial City.

Worn down by the Hundred Years' War, England sought a new realm for sea trade, eventually discovered the New World, migrated there, brought in other species to make up for that, and became the fictional world of Aerial City – London due to the intervention of the gods and demons.

All fictional things can exist in that world and it was an unnamed school of Belle de Marionnette makers who gave Belle de Marionnettes their next evolution. They adored the story of Coppelia and every last one of them worked nonstop until they had created Belle de Marionnettes who could evolve into humans.

That theory was born in that land during the 17th Century, but it was not completed until the early 18th Century. And the foundation of the self-evolving Belle de Marionnette was finally created in 1912. The three on which it was based were named the Aileppoc-type, revealed to the world, and became the foundation of the current mainstream style.

The old man who is the sole survivor of that school of Belle de Marionnette makers has created a total of 49 Aileppoc-types, including the 3 initial ones, and they are still functional today. Most of them work at England's Oxford University or at Scotland Yard.

The foundational theory of the Aileppoc-type Belle de Marionnettes was brought to Europe and America during World War One and used in the weapons and prosthetics of the time. The most well-known examples would be the stateless self-evolving Kaiserburg airship, the 7 ships based on it, and Riryoku, the Card Device possessed by 6th Sword Master Souwa Kanou.

What does the future hold for these Belle de Marionnettes who can evolve on their own thanks to their history? I am sure my two friends will find the answer.

That which was created as a machine, modeled after humans, and can

become something greater than human is approaching her true self. That is all it is.

My friend is nameless. I do not know if the creator she calls her father was unlicensed or if her current master has simply forgotten, but she has no designation beyond the name Rosetta. And I think that is just fine.

Her and her descendants (there was news of a Belle de Marionnette giving birth in England about 5 years ago. The idea weirded me out at the time, but it seems perfectly natural now) will evolve to the point that no designation is necessary.

That is the history of Belle de Marionnettes as I know it and my predictions for the future.

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 07:00, I remained at level 3 alert on the Normandy coast. Nothing to report.

At 23:06, a report arrived of Allied ships seen in the Calais region. The general headquarters ordered all divisions between Calais and Normandy to move to Calais. Our 352nd Infantry Division did not move.

At 23:45, the platoon commanders gathered for an emergency meeting. We all see the movement near Calais as a diversion. The infantry and assault artillery units are to remain on standby in 6-hour shifts. The Panzer units are to remain on standby in 12-hour shifts.

I will not sleep tonight. I await the enemy.

June 5, 1944

**Landlord's Letter: To the Girl Who Once Lived in My
Appartement**

I have found your mother's forwarding address.

I was unable to Ajouter the letter from her within my paperwork box and had no idea why, but the other day, I was redecorating the house and Ajouter-ed her postcard stuck to the wall.

The postcard was old and dirty from the kitchen, but I was able to read the address and name: Rose Francisca at Herlde 1-3, Morvan, Bourgogne.

The village of Herlde in the Morvan Mountains is the closest to the Black Dragon of Morvan. Based on the postcard, the scenery must be nice.

I hope you have a wonderful reunion and *vacances*.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 1st Entry

I have finished dinner.

This morning some things must have been taken into the storeroom while I was asleep. I awoke to the sound of carriage wheels. I rushed out into the hallway in time to see my master leaving the courtyard storeroom. He said a friend had brought some parts to repair that machine.

Lady Beretta visited at lunchtime. She helped me cook and broke a lot of plates. The biggest problem was when the coffee cup my master has long used – I would use it to make café au lait – broke cleanly in two. Lately Lady Beretta can neglect her work because she is so worried about the ring on her right hand. I cautioned her about that.

I will need to go into town to buy more plates soon.

But the city's atmosphere has changed lately. Some stores have empty shelves and have closed up. That may explain what happened at the night market in front of Boulogne that my master and I visited the night before last. I had seen a knife I wanted at a store in the shopping district and there it was for sale in the night market. That store had empty shelves 3 days before. So its products must have been moved to the night market.

They are very kind to sell it for so much less.

Then we set up a table and chairs in the garden so Lady Beretta could use some books to teach me how to write. She was still acting weird sometimes.

She would occasionally rest her head in her hand and stare into the city. Or she

would stare at me. I think she was thinking about something. But I did not ask about what.

She did say this:

“Rosetta. Even if the old man leaves tonight you must not go outside. Just stay put.”

I do not know what she meant. But that is what she said.

The Fantasmé Renard children approached while we spoke. They played with us. They had avoided Lady Beretta before. But they must be able to relax around her now because they touched her hand.

The one female – the one with brown fur – especially seemed to like her. It climbed up onto her lap while she sat in her chair. She picked it up and held it in front of her face. It did not know what was happening and struggled.

“Let’s name this one Mallette. It has brown fur and it’s a girl.”

Since the other two were males we named them Jack and Jean. Jack is Lady Beretta’s father’s name and Jean is Sir Phillip’s grandfather’s name.

The parents were a male and a female so I named them Beretta and Phillip. Lady Beretta was clearly displeased but I do not mind. I think this is for the best.

After a while Lady Beretta lowered the Fantasmé Renard we had named Mallette – calling out that name felt weird. But Mallette immediately climbed back onto her lap and rested its chin on the table. It seemed to like her.

Lady Beretta held Mallette and looked up into the sky. Then she sang a song:

That which is filled with the blue sky.

That which is covered by the red dirt.

I name thee heaven and earth.

Where the wind howls bravely.

Where the sand dances gently.

I view thee as heaven and earth.

So that no one would grieve again.

That which is endless and cannot be grasped.

That which is vast and cannot be held.

I am with thee.

“Did I already teach you that? It’s a Lourd de Écrivain’s ode to the wide vision of a Lourd de Marionnette. It talks about the heavens and the earth as everything...but words can be so vague.”

Did she mean that words could mean more than one thing?

She opened her notebook and looked to Mallette in her lap as he spoke.

“This Mallette and the ‘Lady Mallette’ you refer to are different things. We can call them both “Mallette”. But they are different. If you only Signe-d ‘Mallette’ it might be unclear which you meant. But this isn’t the other Mallette. Right? Do you know what I mean?”

She smiled and rubbed Mallette’s throat. And she said more.

“I think it’s because our wills decide it. Our will to distinguish between things.”

I had trouble understanding her. But I will write it all here.

I kind of understood. I wonder if my will to become human is the same thing.

Lady Beretta is currently taking a bath. My master called for her before she left and asked her to help repair the big machine in the storeroom and to help pack some boxes.

I am a bit worried about what she said.

Is something going to happen tonight?

I will continue to think about that while heading to the kitchen to cook some food for the two of them.

Secret Message from the Allied General Headquarters: To All Commanders Stationed in the UK

The weather is bad, but today's Operation Overlord will continue as planned. Everyone is to make a final check of the timetable.

All units are to obey the following with anti-moonlight equipment.

Naval Units: Today at 21:30, leave the naval construction unit. To prepare, the ocean port structure used for landing will be pulled up from the ocean and construction will begin. At 21:00, the cruisers will take the lead to protect the supply ships and fueling equipment unit and to follow after the landing ships. Tomorrow at 04:00, the ships will begin bombarding the Normandy coast.

Air Units: At 20:30, the division leaves. After securing air superiority above the ocean, begin dropping paratroops tomorrow at 01:00. At 04:00, begin aerial bombing of the Normandy coast.

Ground Units: At 02:00, the landing units will meet up at the ocean port structure. Confirm the four landing positions and perform a final roll call. Tomorrow at 05:00, begin the landing operation.

Beretta's Journal

Today, I am writing this in the Balleroy house's study. The second floor has a good view, but it's kind of dusty and there was apparently a torture room next to this one, so what's with that?

Europe is going to be thrown into chaos tonight thanks to the Normandy landing operation, but everything is peaceful within France. The Germans are in control, but the Resistance uprising isn't for a while. So while things are tense, they're the same as usual. All the problems are with me.

First, it's great that the landlord's letter told me where Rose Francisca lives, but it's in Herlde. It's true that mountain village is in Bourgogne where the Attesor Project was held, but what is my great-grandmother doing living in a village that's going to be destroyed by a black dragon on August 1?

I checked on a map and it's really deep in the mountains.

The exam results will be announced on June 20. I've decided to reserve tickets before then and leave on the 21st. It's too far to take the roads and mountain passes, but it's doable by train even if it will take a whole day. If not for the Germans, I could buy a ticket that moves between regions without having to submit paperwork for some weird inspection. Still, I want to take Rosetta with me and take a look at a lot of things. I invited Mallette too, but she's taking a vacation at her parent's house on the city outskirts.

I thought of inviting Phillip, but he wasn't at his home. According to this grandfather, he's working hard at his German job. I'm probably the only one that knows that's directly related to his work as a spy.

I plan to return from Herlde on July 28. If I can drag my great-grandmother away, I'll bring her with me on the pretext of visiting Paris so she won't be around for the dragon attack. Phillip fights his final battle on the 1st. I doubt I can be by his side, but I want to see it.

After all, I still haven't thanked him for the ring he gave me. I want to see him before June 21st, but I want to give his circumstances priority. (Wow, I'm being timid.)

Anyway, I'm going to be really busy. But that might be for the best. That way I won't worry about myself. For now, I need to think about the Attesor Project and Rose Francisca.

My great-grandfather was involved in that top secret project throughout World War One.

The project increased the mobilization of Heavy Barrels to outdo tanks and fighters and to make them the strongest ground weapon. At the time, the Allies had few mass-produced forces compared to the Germans' armored divisions, so Heavy Barrels were their trump card. But compared to the enemy's numbers and mobility, Barrels were slow and made for large targets.

They needed the mobility to react to airplanes and avoid tank guns.

If they could reach the values given in the project paperwork, a single Heavy Barrel could destroy an entire army division on its own.

But after all that theoretical planning, the war ended and all of the paperwork was destroyed and the participants erased their own memories.

Yet my grandmother's research suggests the project was nearly completed and the researchers abandoned it because their consciences demanded it. It was my great-grandfather, Jack McWild, who led the destruction of the paperwork, but he could not entirely put it behind him after the war.

The reason he did not tell my grandmother or Rose Francisca about the Attesor Project is directly linked to the reason he was killed.

That's just how dangerous it is. So what is it?

I suppose I'll find out if I go to the Bourgogne Region. If I can discover what definition of "strongest" Jack McWild was pursuing and I can meet Rose Francisca and fulfill my grandmother's request, maybe I can solve some of my own problems too.

I'm sure Rosetta will grow a lot by accompanying me.

Now, it's about time I got back to work. We need to work late into the night repairing Protected Empress, dismantling her, and hiding her in the storeroom. She'll probably be Formatted without anyone using her again.

In a few hours, bombers will fly through the air.

Europe is about to move. Is there no way France can be truly liberated in response? If Rosetta grew, Phillip didn't die, and Rose Francisca didn't die either, that's probably what I would want.

Setting aside that the outside world would be destroyed, I would want to liberate France.

June 6, 1944

Telegram from Allied General Headquarters: To All Troops

It is currently 00:00.

Begin Overlord.

Rosetta's Journal: Today's 2nd Entry

It is late at night but something happened that I must write about. I am currently in my bed. Lady Beretta is sleeping next to me. I plan to write what I must write in just a few minutes. Then I will turn off the light and go to sleep.

It is noisy outside.

I can hear the loud sound of distant cars driving. I can also hear airplanes flying.

When I look out the window I can see red lights and several white lights extending up toward heaven.

This night my master and Lady Beretta began assembling that machine's lower body in the courtyard – they pulled a small crane and other work machines from the storeroom. They assembled it unbelievably quickly. I rushed to the kitchen to make them some food and then carried it out to them. Then I helped carry tools.

But they did not touch their food until they were done working. They made incredible progress. This must be their specialty.

I think it was 1 in the morning before most of the work was complete. That means they finished in about 5 hours.

My master went to take a bath and Lady Beretta looked up into the night sky from the courtyard.

I entered the courtyard to speak to her. That was when it happened.

I first Signe'd the wind. I was hoping there would be wind and that was why I Signe-d. Then I Ajouter-ed to see what was actually happening.

<A sudden rumbling transforms into a wind that blows down into the courtyard.

A sound so loud it shakes my body falls from the sky.>

It was a very very very loud noise. I had never heard anything so loud.

I looked up into the black sky and Ajouter-ed the noise and wind descending from it. It was a silhouette.

<An aerial bomber ship!? It's the Allies' anti-moonlight air division!"

Lady Beretta shouts that and several more identical airplane silhouettes fly through the night sky. They have large wings and bodies. Their silhouettes jut out of the rectangle of sky visible from the mansion's courtyard.

They are too big to fit in that cutout of the sky.>

So very many of them flew through the sky.

My master shouted at us while running out of the kitchen.

"Are those the Allies' B-17 aerial bomber ships!?"

"Don't come running out in front of girls when you're naked!!"

"Quiet, little girl. And don't look!!"

I did not look.

I soon Signe-d that the city suddenly came to life. I figured that the people would be shocked into action like we were. I Ajouter-ed and that was exactly

the case.

<Several pillars of light illuminate the sky and noise fills the city. There is also some kind of repeating noise very similar to gunfire. The city is producing as much light and noise as I can imagine.>



“The Germans are trying to shoot them down.”

“They’ll never reach them. Those can easily fly through the higher altitudes where the moonlight is strong.”

This was war. It had begun. No, it had already begun. I simply had not Signed it before. Because I lacked the information necessary to know what it was.

Lady Beretta spoke as if the noise and wind were enveloping her.

“I’m glad we got those repairs done today. They’ll have patrol planes in the skies from now on so we wouldn’t be able to use the courtyard as a workshop since it has no roof or cover.”

I Ajouter-ed the sky while listening to her.

Something other than wind was falling from the sky:

<A warning and metal objects attached to small parachutes.

The objects are about palm-sized.>

They are apparently known as handguns. According to my master...

“These are simple pressed handguns. It has the word Liberator carved into it. I suppose the people of Paris are supposed to kill the German soldiers with them.”

Papers the size of postcards also fell from the sky.

They had a short text written in French. I think it had something to do with the war but I still do not understand what it meant. I left it on the bedside table

along with one of the handguns.

It is noisy outside. I heard the dining hall clock ring five times in the distance.

Lady Beretta will be going to school early in the morning. I would like to stay awake and begin fixing breakfast at 6:30. But...

<“What do I do...?”>

Lady Beretta muttered that while seemingly having a bad dream. She grabbed me and held me in her arms.

I cannot leave her now. Her expression softens so much when she holds me like this. I think it is the same expression as when someone rubs my head.

I might wait for morning while looking at Lady Beretta’s expression.

It is noisy outside. But the noise is no longer coming from the sky.

What has begun?

Heinz Berge's Journal

Today at 04:05, the guard team sent word of an enemy attack. We shut off all the lights and relied on our sight devices' infrared detection while preparing for an emergency battle.

At the same time, the enemy aerial force began bombing. Anti-air fire only revealed our position, so we stopped. As soon as each soldier was ready, they left in order to escape the bombing.

We heard enemy ships firing out at sea. Meanwhile, a messenger from the Geheimnis Agency arrived and gave me the following message: "Destiny is moving such that you are certain to survive. Have an excellent battle."

As I have no emotions, that holds little meaning for me.

Rot Löwe requires another 2 minutes to power up.

While preparing for Schreiben, a bookmark fell out of my uniform pocket.

For some reason, I remembered the name of the flower on the back: four o'clock flower.

I have confirmed that it means timidity, so I will now begin the Schreiben. I will get no sleep tonight.

Afterword

When I think of the French language, the first thing that comes to my mind is “Bonjour~, how are you doing? (really roll those r’s)”, so I knew I was going to have to spend some long nights on this one.

Now, (“now” what?), the City Series seems to be where the idea of a consistent setting goes to die, but this one is even more unique than most.

After all, when I pitched the series to my editor Watchman Satou-san, I told him this:

“Double blondes! A maid automaton! There will be robots! It’ll be fast-paced with lots of action!”

He said that sounded incredible, but then I came back with this. Once I wrote it, those selling points just seemed vanish. I instead had a story of a wild girl and a gentle girl getting to know each other and worrying about things. It’s a slower pace than City usually is, but I’m going to use all that buildup to really get things moving in the second half.

The City Series’ France is following real history pretty closely, but please understand that a lot of things are different. Unlike a piece of historical fiction, this is a fictional world with its own fictional history for double the fiction.

Looking into this period of history can be dangerously fascinating, but if you’re interested, look into the events in Europe during World War Two. The Normandy landing operation at the end of this volume has been used in a lot of movies and such, so you can tell that this period is what war is for Western Europe.

Now for the customary phone call. This one is from a riverside payphone. (I still only have internet at home, so the phone and fax machine aren’t hooked up yet.)

“Hey, it’s me. It’s pretty early, but are you up?”

“Oh, Kawakami? Sorry, but I’m about to head for the office.”

“What? The office? Don’t be ridiculous. You work at a company.”

“If you don’t think about what words mean before you speak, it’s going to lead to misunderstandings. Like that you run too much.”

“Oh, shut up. I’m about to get to sleep. Now, tell me what you thought of Paris.”

“Oh, Paris? You dirty old man. Bye.”

“Huh? Wait, don’t hang up! Hey!!”

Now this is a problem. Did I really write anything that dirty this time?

Anyway, time for some personal information. I’m still running my website. I’m posting information on the different cities and an original story whenever I feel like it, so check it out if you have time.

The URL is <http://www.din.or.jp/~arm/>.

It seems the Osaka game is sold out, so consider yourself lucky if you managed to get a copy. I am writing up a walkthrough on my site.

The URL for Tenky, the company I work at, (the Osaka game and this book’s illustrations were both made there) is <http://tenky.co.jp>, so check it out. You can find the most information on Osaka there.

Now, then.

My background music this time went straight to video games with Zuntata’s Burning Road. Personally, I see that as the background music when the Heavy Barrels are running. I think I’ll go with video games again next time. (How deep.)

This will continue with Part B, but while editing and rereading Part A, I was thinking about the following question:

“Who is the most selfish?”

Bye bye.

May 1999. A morning with a meeting scheduled later.

-Kawakami Minoru

Satoyasu's Page

はいというわけで



またページもらっちゃいました。
次もこんな感じでがんばります。
こんなオレですか。

よろしくお願ひ
します。

さとせす



コレはまちがい

Top: And with that...

Mallette: Kyahh

Middle:

I was given a page again.

I plan to keep at it like this next time too.

I might not be the best, but I hope you will support me.

-Satoyasu

Mallette: Puff

Bottom: This part didn't happen.